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THE UNIVERSE OF CYRANO DE BERGERAC (1619-1655)

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Thesis submitted

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Royal Holloway College

University of London

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**FOR MY PARENTS**

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to discover the nature of the universe of Cyrano De Bergerac as perceived in his imaginative works, and, in particular, in his two novels known as L'Autre Monde, by common consent the major of his works. As preparatory work, as wide a knowledge as has been practicable has been acquired of late sixteenth-century French and Italian writings, and seventeenth-century French ones, treating of topics and questions akin to those to be seen in Cyrano's work; while set into this framework, the main enquiry is basically inductive in approach.

In the Introduction, the aims of this study are outlined, and past critical approaches to Cyrano and to his work discussed. In Chapter II, an attempt is made to discern the constants in Cyrano's multifarious depictions of the physical universe. Chapters III, IV, and V consist in an elucidation of Cyrano's notion of man's place in the universe, and of what he considers to be sound social and political attitudes. Out of these findings arises the question of the nature of the freedom advocated by him; this is discussed in chapter VI. Recent studies have presented diametrically opposed interpretations of Cyrano's epistemology, thus necessitating further consideration of this aspect of his thought. Does he have a theory of knowledge? If so, why is there disparity in critics'

appraisal of it? Cyrano's notion of, and attitude to the experience of knowing is explored in chapter VII. The final chapter considers the formal aspects of Cyrano's novels and letters, and the light that these throw on his attitudes and beliefs. The study demonstrates that all Cyrano's writings witness to the same set of moral values. In the Conclusion, these findings are set into the context of European thought from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I take pleasure in acknowledging my inestimable debt to Emeritus Professor John S. Spink, formerly Head of the Department of French at Bedford College, London, who has given so generously of his time and experience in advising on this thesis. To have glimpsed something of his sagacity and immense scholarship has been a rare delight. I hope that, despite its faults, this study may serve as an expression of my profound gratitude to him.

To Bedford College I owe a special debt, for enabling me to work under Professor Spink's supervision, and to avail myself of its many facilities. I should like to thank all those who made me welcome there, and, in particular, the librarian, Mr. G. M. Paterson.

It is a pleasure too, to have the opportunity to express my appreciation to the former and present Principals of the Royal Holloway College, London, for granting me respectively leave of absence and a term's sabbatical leave, and to Professor Brian V. Juden, Head of the Department of French Language and Literature, for his consideration and moral support.

I am most grateful to Miss Joan Gibbs, Sub-librarian and Head of the Palaeography and Archives section of the University library, for her unstinting and patient guidance, and to Miss Nancy Hyde, Senior Assistant librarian at Royal Holloway College, for her kind assistance.

For financial help, I am happy to record my thanks to the Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Paris, and to the administrators of the Central Research Fund of the University of London.

I am mindful, in conclusion, of all those friends and colleagues who, by their advice, forbearance and encouragement, have helped so much during the period of composition of this study.

ABBREVIATIONS

6.

A.M. = L'Autre Monde, including Les États et Empires de la Lune and the Histoire comique des États et Empires du Soleil.

Agr. = La Mort d'Agrippine.

P.J. = Le Pédant joué.

All references to the above works are to the edition of Fr. Lachèvre, Les OEuvres libertines de Cyrano de Bergerac, Paris, Champion, 1921. The first volume includes the Autre Monde, and the second, the two plays.

L. = Lettres. All references are to the edition of L. Erba, Milan, V. Scheiwiller, 1965.

Lune = Les États et Empires de la Lune.

Soleil = Histoire comique des États et Empires du Soleil.

M = Manuscript of the Lune in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich [Press mark: No. 420 (Gall. 419)], entitled L'autre Monde ou Les Empires et estatz De la Lune.

P = Manuscript of the Lune in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris [Press mark: Nouv. acq. fr. 4558], entitled L'autre Monde ou Les Estats et Empires de la Lune.

E = Histoire comique par Monsieur de Cyrano Bergerac contenant les Estats et Empires de la Lune, Paris, Ch. de Sercy, 1657 [copy of the Bibliothèque nationale, press mark: Y<sup>2</sup> 25400].

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INTRODUCTIONCRITICAL NORMS

My aim in this study has been to let the work of Cyrano live on its own terms. Such a task would seem to involve two operations: the setting back of the text into its original milieu, and the transposition of that seventeenth-century experience into the language of our twentieth-century, post-second-world-war, minds. In practice, doubtless, the two processes coincide, our modes of expression necessarily shaping our thought and vice versa, just as they did in the case of Cyrano; but, to understand and to explain requires an actively willed forgetting of much that we take for granted and which was unknown to seventeenth-century man, as much as it does a familiarity with writings and events of the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. So, I have tried throughout to steer clear of extended comparisons between Cyrano's ideas and those of thinkers who, considered as the pioneers of our world, have been afforded by us an importance which may, perhaps, outstrip, or differ in nature from, that which they were seen to command by their contemporaries. I refer to Descartes, and Pascal, for instance, only when the parallel or opposition between their notions and those of Cyrano seems merited by the internal evidence of the text, that is, through specific mention of the better known writer or through a close parenté d'idées backed by the context. I have attempted to draw upon a wider field of bookish knowledge

of the period, representative of the publications available and of the books actually read by Cyrano's contemporaries. For, if we compare the thought of Cyrano with the gamut of late sixteenth-century writings of France and Italy and early seventeenth-century French works, we discover, I believe, a far wider range of meeting points, and thus a far greater coherence in his universe, than between either of these and our present-day picture of that century. Campanella, Cardano, and to us lesser known figures such as Tristan L'Hermite or La Mothe le Vayer, if we are to judge by the internal evidence of the Autre Monde,<sup>1</sup> are quite as important in Cyrano's reckoning as are Descartes or Gassendi.

In this study, therefore, as Part II of the bibliography bears witness (16th to 18th century works consulted), I have tried to resituate Cyrano's thought within the context of late sixteenth-century Italian and French thought as that is reflected in the writings of early seventeenth-century French 'libertins érudits', and within that of their orthodox counterpart, early seventeenth-century apologetics. While obviously not being able to ignore cognizance of eighteenth-century and subsequent assessments of the value of the works of the cosmologists, thinkers who certainly were known by, and resorted to, by Cyrano, namely Copernicus, Galileo, Descartes, Kepler, I have deliberately played down any adherence to the criteria which served to effect those later judgements, my aim

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1. Following the example of F. Lachèvre, Œuvres libertines de Cyrano de Bergerac, Paris, 1921, I include throughout in the title L'Autre Monde both Les Etats et Empires de la Lune and Les Etats et Empires du Soleil.

being to comprehend Cyrano's universe as seen by Cyrano, not that universe as seen in our own perspective, or in an 'enlightened' one.

It is for this reason that I have not sought to determine the originality of Cyrano, but rather to discern the main themes and leit-motifs which characterize his work. Rather than follow any extraneous predilection in determining an approach to the work, I have endeavoured to discover those of its writer through it. In other words, the Cyrano in whom we are interested is not the Cyrano, political polemicist, the Cyrano, student of Physics, not the Cyrano of the Mazarinades or of the Fragment de Physique, but the Cyrano, creative artist, producing his own vision of the world.

Ideally, this study would resemble Cyrano's imaginative writing in its formal and thematic complexion, tailor fitting the very spirit of the original while all the while transposing it into twentieth-century terms. It is precisely because the manner in which Cyrano describes his vision of the universe presupposes a culture then taken for granted throughout Europe that I have constantly attempted to take that culture into account.

Given that the universe with which we are concerned is an imaginative creation, biographical details other than those concerning his intellectual and imaginative experience are of no direct interest. In any case, little of factual nature is known about our author's career: the panegyric of Lebret which prefaces the first edition of the Lune is perhaps as open to doubt as the invective and gossip of Dassoucy turned enemy, of

Tallemant des Réaux, or of the author of the Menagiana.<sup>2</sup> The legend is probably as far removed from historical fact as is Cyrano's fictional world.

The gap between a literary invention and the externally apparent 'life' of its author must by the very nature of art be unbridgeable. That there should exist a disparity between the man as his friends and enemies envisage him and his work is far more likely than the reverse: the more imaginatively creative the artistic product, the greater would one expect this disparity to be.

My intention in this study has been to elucidate as faithfully as possible Cyrano's vision of the universe in his imaginative works. In this category I have placed the Letters, Le Pédant joué, La Mort d'Agrippine, and the two novels of the Autre Monde. While it might be argued that such a project requires a full study of each of these works, I have chosen to concentrate on one genre, incorporating two closely related novels, the Lune and its sequel the Soleil, on the following grounds. L'Autre Monde is by common consent Cyrano's major work. To give equal attention to the other productions indiscriminately would have obscured this fact. The output of the artist is characterized by his personality which, barring accidental circumstance such as cerebral damage, obtains throughout his life; each creation he effects will be an expression of it; but, each creation, likewise, has been conceived

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2. Les Pensées de M. Dassoucy, Paris, 1672, quoted by Lachèvre, ibid., I, pp. xcv-xcvi; Tallemant, Historiettes, Paris, 1961, (Pléiade ed.), II, p. 886; Menagiana, Amsterdam, 1693, p. 199.

and produced as an entity, as a world formally and spiritually complete. However extended the period of its composition, it is a world existing independently of all those other worlds which that writer may also have fashioned. Therefore, to examine all the works mentioned, in equal concentration, requires that each be considered in turn, consecutively. This I have done as preparative work for the study of L'Autre Monde, to which I have afforded the greatest emphasis, treating of it analytically. Rather than deal with all the imaginative works diachronically, I have throughout set L'Autre Monde in the framework of the other works as a whole. This gives a synchronistic treatment without allowing L'Autre Monde to disappear into an undifferentiated magma of thematic detail.

Apart from their satirical content, the main interest of the Letters has almost invariably been held to be stylistic;<sup>3</sup> their complexion, envisaged within the context of the Autre Monde, has provided the backbone of the last chapter. The two letters 'Pour les Sorciers' and 'Contre les Sorciers' bear the closest affinity with one aspect of the Autre Monde epitomized in the initial Toulousain episode of the Soleil. Each one of the letters is an entire world. The anti-authoritarianism

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3. For Lachèvre, op. cit., II, p.155, in their published state, the letters 'n'ont de valeur, si elles valent quelque chose, qu'au point de vue littéraire; on n'y trouvera ni un sentiment vrai, ni un atome de réalité'; Théophile Gautier describes them as 'des espèces d'amplification où la bizarrerie du style le dispute à la recherche des idées - c'est le genre pointu et précieux' (Les Grotesques, Paris, 1882, p.208), Charles Nodier as 'un fatras d'hyperboles, de CONCETTI, de saillies à éblouir... des riens' (B. Despériers. Cyrano de Bergerac, Paris, 1841, p.108). Jeanne Goldin in her Cyrano de Bergerac et l'art de la pointe, Montreal, 1973, aims to relate the letters to the work as a whole.

running through the whole of the Autre Monde finds an alternative expression in the comic world of pedant and peasant of the Pédant joué. La Mort d'Agrippine, impressively viable as a tragedy, is relevant in terms of our subject mainly for the attitudes of Séjanus; this parallel has been drawn in chapter VI. The Autre Monde is the richest of Cyrano's fictional worlds and possesses at once far more facets than any of the others and incorporates the content of those others in its own universe.

The manner in which Cyrano presents his imagined lunar and solar regions, in this similar to the 'pointed' universe of his letters, is 'kaleidoscopic';<sup>4</sup> in my presentation I have endeavoured to adopt this method while keeping a logical order in the progression from one chapter to the next. I have tried always to keep the whole work in mind while discussing any one theme, for, in Cyrano's representations notwithstanding the multifarious shifts in vantage point certain basic themes are discernible which form the link between apparently disparate elements.

In my first chapter, after a preliminary consideration of the 1654 edition of La Mort d'Agrippine and a comparison of the manuscript and 1654 versions of Le Pédant joué and the Letters, I have attempted to determine which - if any - of the three versions of the Lune, those of the Paris and Munich manuscripts, and of the first, posthumous, 1657 edition, reflects most faithfully the ipsissima verba of Cyrano. I have

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4. This term is used by Jeanne Goldin, ibid., pp.114 and 134, of one kind of Cyranian 'pointe'.

then described the textual features of the Soleil, for which we possess no manuscript, and, following this, the probable dates of composition of Lune and Soleil on the internal evidence of those works are discussed. Then I have considered the complexion of both as novels, including an examination of the coherence between them. This initial survey is intended to clear the ground, preparing the way for an exposition of the main themes of the Autre Monde.

Chapter II treats of the physical components of Cyrano's universe, which provide the infrastructure of his picture of man and of his place in the cosmos. This last is the main subject of the thesis, which I treat of in the five chapters following: chapter III deals with Cyrano's interpretation of the commonplace theory of the scale of being; chapter IV continues this theme in the more specific context of Cyrano's attack on anthropocentrism. Chapter V looks at Cyrano's concept of society, and chapter VI that of the freedom of the individual, or lack of it, in a materialist universe. The relationship between Cyrano's monistic materialism and his theory of knowledge is discussed in the penultimate chapter. In the last chapter, the inter-dependence of thought and modes of expression is examined within the context of the crisis of belief which characterizes the period in which Cyrano lived, new concepts requiring new linguistic terms. In the conclusion it is maintained that the universe peculiar to Cyrano is shaped essentially by a moral, not a scientific, ethos. Its various perspectives are discussed within the wider context of European thought in the first half of the seventeenth century.

Many of the traditional approaches to Cyrano's work are inappropriate to the aims of this study. However, I am indebted to a number of recent books and articles: in particular, I owe much to the third chapter of Professor Spink's French free thought from Gassendi to Voltaire, where he outlines the main ideas of Cyrano, and to his consideration of the episode of the sun inhabitants' metamorphoses in his article 'Form and Structure: Cyrano de Bergerac's atomistic conception of metamorphosis'; this last has proved the most seminal of all the material which I have read on the subject of the Autre Monde. The unpublished thesis of Mme Annette Lavers and her article treating of Cyrano's epistemology, the full length studies of Cyrano's thought published within three months of each other by Erica Harth and Madeleine Alcover, and, lastly, the study of the 'pointe' in Cyrano of Mme. Jeanne Goldin which sets a new critical trend in Cyranian exegesis, have all proved very valuable reading, as the body of this thesis shows.<sup>5</sup> All these scholars have broken away from the traditional concern with the legend of the life in the examination of the thought, and all of them take fully into account the schools of thought prevalent in Cyrano's lifetime, though the slant given to this information differs: in particular, Dr. Harth's avowed intention to relate Cyrano's thought to that of the Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes and to the eighteenth century rather than to the late sixteenth and the seventeenth

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5. For full details of these works see Bibliography below, sections III and IV, items nos. 312, 198, 173, 172, 157, 132, 153.



ones<sup>6</sup> would seem to belie the evidence of her bibliography and to provide a less convincing account of Cyrano's thought than the opposite thesis of her contemporary, Mme. Alcover.<sup>7</sup>

In gaining knowledge of the period in which Cyrano's thought is couched, apart from the primary sources listed in the bibliography under sixteenth to eighteenth-century works consulted, I have found particularly useful the following documentation: J-Roger Charbonnel's study of La Pensée italienne au XVI<sup>e</sup>. siècle et le courant libertin; Henri Busson's survey of La Pensée religieuse française de Charron à Pascal; René Pintard's thesis, Le Libertinage érudit dans la première moitié du XVII<sup>e</sup>. siècle; John Spink's appraisal of French free thought from Gassendi to Voltaire; the more specific study of La philosophie de Gassendi by P-F. Thomas, that of La Conception de la nature chez Giordano Bruno by Hélène Védrine, and that of Le Francion de Charles Sorel by Frank Sutcliffe. The nub of chapter II is to be found in an article of Professor Spink on 'Libertinage et "spinozisme": la théorie de l'âme ignée' in French Studies, 1947. The crucial importance of language in a society's ethos is attested in Michel Foucault's Les Mots et les choses which proved a fitting backing for the content of the final chapter.<sup>8</sup>

Before considering the text of Cyrano, it is perhaps requisite to explain why I have tended to eschew the more

6. Cf. fly-leaf and introduction to her book.

7. Cf. my review of the two books in Modern Language Review, vol. 68, 1973, pp. 407-9, reproduced in Appendix B, below.

8. Cf. note 5 above. See Bibliography below, items, nos. 225, 220, 288, 312, 322, 332, 320, 313, 233.

traditional scholarly approaches to his work. These consist in the following methods: the man and his works, or the biographical approach; the comparison and contrast between the legendary, usually equated with the Rostand representation, and the 'true' or 'real' Cyrano; the use of the works to hunt sources to them; and the use of the Autre Monde to deduce scientific 'presciences'.

The first full-length study of Cyrano is the thesis of R-Antoine Brun, published in 1893, which follows the standard pattern of biographical enquiry plus the consideration in turn of each of Cyrano's works in the order of their publication. He was the first French scholar to have access to the manuscripts of the Lune and of the Pédant joué together with the majority of the letters: (Bibliothèque Nationale; Fonds français, nouv. acq. nos. 4558, 4557).

10 The first French edition to make use of both manuscripts of the Lune, as well as of the 1657 (expurgated) first edition, was that of the bibliophile, Frédéric Lachèvre, comprizing all of Cyrano's works then extant, published in two parts between 1921 and 1922. This has been acknowledged as the standard edition of Cyrano's work ever since.

Brun's thesis and Lachèvre's biographical introduction became the prototype of Cyranian research until well into the post-second-world-war period, especially with regard to biographical detail. As a scathing article he wrote in answer to an essay by a Mlle Magy, doubting the veracity of some of his documentation, bears witness, Lachèvre set himself

up as an inviolable authority on the subject; he called his polemic 'La réhabilitation de Cyrano de Bergerac'.<sup>9</sup>

One might well argue that the date 1905 is something of a delineating boundary in Cyranian scholarship, for it was in this year that H. Dübi was able to bring to light the substance of the Paris manuscript of the Lune, which, apart from Brun's attention, had lain unnoticed in the B.N. from 1890. He published the expurgations of the 1657 text, save for the passages which treat of the futility of virginity, of the lack of obligation to senile parents, and of the impossibility of personal immortality and resurrection. While the general knowledge of the novel was still limited, Dübi is braver than Brun, who mentions the expurgated passages but will quote only the most anodine parts of them.<sup>10</sup>

In 1909 Leo Jordan wrote of his discovery of the Munich manuscript, and in 1910 he published the Lune in a composite version with variants, using the Munich and Paris ~~ms~~<sup>manuscripts</sup> and the 1659 second edition of the expurgated text.<sup>11</sup> Thus,

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9. In his Nouvelles glanes bibliographiques et littéraires, Paris, 1933, pp. 334-42. See also Henriette Magy, Le véritable Cyrano de Bergerac, Paris, 1927.
10. Dübi's research was first published in article form in Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen, Bd. CXIII, pp. 352-73; Bd. CXIV, pp. 115-45, 371-96; Bd. CXV, pp. 133-61. Brun's excerpts from the Paris ms are to be found in appendix 7 of his thesis Savinien de Cyrano Bergerac, Paris, 1893, pp. 367-76.
11. See his article 'Ein neues Manuscript von Cyrano's L'Autre Monde' in Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen, Bd. CXXII, pp. 64-9; his edition is discussed in chapter I below, pp. 55-6 and 58-9.

by 1910, if not 1905, scholars had access to a complete text of the most libertine of Cyrano's works. It is generally argued that the expurgated 'Lebret' version of 1657 is an impoverished and mutilated apology for the Cyranian original; this view still obtains, and, if it were exact, one would expect criticism to show a marked change somewhere between 1905 and 1922, when Lachèvre's better known French edition was widely bought. However, this is not the case; the traditional arguments run unbroken, save for the rare exception, from Cyrano's life-time, through Brun and Lachèvre who add documentation to hearsay, to the late 1940s. Even now, some writings still seem heavily indebted to those original mid-seventeenth-century legends not borne out by the text and accentuated by Rostand's fiction. I have, in any case, argued, in the first chapter which follows, that the 1657 text does not obfuscate the main directives of the author, nor destroy the gist of the novel. That this is so is demonstrated pragmatically: whereas Brun, cognizant of the complete text, does not make any marked use of it, Lacroix, by contrast, restricted to the expurgated version, yet perceives clearly the libertine overtones of the Lune.<sup>12</sup>

The uneven quality of Cyranian criticism from the turn of the century to the second-world-war period is largely explained by the moral issues raised by the content of our

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12. See the 'Notice historique' with which he prefaces his edition, published under the pseudonym of P.L. Jacob (Histoire comique des États et Empires de la Lune et du Soleil, Paris, 1858).

subject's thought. The common denominator between Brun and Lachèvre is that they both fly in the face of the evidence of their research owing to their own moral conceptions. Brun, with the Paris manuscript in his grasp, plays down its clearly irreligious content: 'ce qui m'a paru le plus intéressant dans cette théorie libertine, c'est que son auteur veut rester orthodoxe'; 'le libertin est loin d'être un athée.'<sup>13</sup> Brun likes Cyrano: he cannot accept the morally reprehensible in an essentially engaging personality.

Lachèvre's standpoint is even more curious. Though he chose to publish eleven volumes of seventeenth-century libertine writings,<sup>14</sup> he is quite explicit in condemning such thought as 'dilettante' and contrary to the French spirit: 'le génie français est l'antipode de la mentalité libertine'. Clearly something of an activist reactionary, his right-wing, orthodox chauvinism shapes his every judgement; thus, for example, he dismisses all in French literature which is not in the vein of 'Classicism'. He quotes from L.Reynaud: 'La France a ... continué la tâche de la civilisation antique'. His pet hate is any literary movement or quality redolent of the Germanic; again he supports his parti-pris with a quotation from Reynaud:

L'Allemagne, en transposant ces conceptions dans le domaine de la métaphysique et en créant le panthéisme évolutif, c'est-à-dire

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13. Op. cit., pp. 320-1.

14. Le Libertinage au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, Paris, 1909-24.

la doctrine qui dégage ou semble dégager de la matière toute réalité, y compris l'esprit de Dieu, n'a fait, en somme, que donner à la tendance naturaliste des peuples germaniques son complément philosophique indispensable.

Not only does such a nationalistic notion of the history of ideas rule out Romanticism: the seventeenth-century 'libertin', as well as the eighteenth-century thinker, English (Locke) and French, are all personae non gratae, and they are so because they all indulge their senses at the expense of their mind. Lachèvre writes: 'Le déséquilibre de l'esprit se manifeste par la domination des sens sur la raison, par le refus de toute discipline, le mépris de la tradition et de l'expérience, en un mot par le dilettantisme. Il a son expression dans l'homme qu'on qualifiait au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle de "libertin"'.<sup>15</sup> That any judgement of Lachèvre must be most carefully examined is clear, especially since this credo is expressed not in his two volumes of Cyrano's work, but in his later publication dealing with eighteenth-century libertinage. The unsuspecting reader of his still standard edition of Cyrano is subjected to a barrage of value judgements, contained in introduction and footnotes.<sup>16</sup>

The new critic delights in openly acclaiming his

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15. Ibid, vol. XI, Le Triomphe du libertinage au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, pp. xi-xvi.

16. E.g. ed. cit., I, p.1: 'Cyrano ne "vénérait" que lui-même et n'attachait d'importance qu'à ses propres conceptions ou plutôt à celles qu'il tâchait de rajeunir... en se les assimilant'; cf. p.68, n.2: 'M. Jacques Denis a une indulgence excessive pour les divagations de Cyrano', and p.89, nn. 2 and 3.

My impressions of Lachèvre's criticism are confirmed by an article, unknown to me at the time of writing, of Walter H. Lemke, Jr. ('Frédéric Lachèvre and Cyrano de Bergerac') in Romance Notes, vol. XIII, no.2, Winter 1971, pp. 292-5.

premises; all too often, those writing at the turn of the century took delight in the assumption that all reasonable men accepted theirs as the truth. Ironically, Lachèvre's attitudes exemplify those which Cyrano had criticized in authority. One cannot quite understand why Lachèvre devoted so much time to an aspect of French literature of which he so heartily disapproved. Conversely, that he did so has proved a boon to later scholars in making these writings readily available. Again, one has to admit that, if a bibliophile such as Lacroix was able to discern the free thinking of Cyrano in the expurgated Lune text, this was probably also a result of his own leanings, which took the same direction as those of the author under review.

Lachèvre's editions of the Autre Monde reflect two other favourite approaches to Cyrano which have continued to preoccupy scholars from at least 1893 to 1957 (from Brun to M. Guirguis): those of uncovering anticipation of later scientific discoveries, and of source hunting.<sup>17</sup> For the first, he relies heavily on an article of A. Jupport entitled 'L'Oeuvre Scientifique de Cyrano de Bergerac'.<sup>18</sup> For the second, he has recourse in the main to Lacroix's edition of the Autre Monde and to Pietro Toldo's article on 'Les voyages merveilleux de Cyrano de Bergerac et de Swift et leurs rapports avec l'oeuvre

17. Cf. below, Bibliography, Section III, items nos. 139, 164, 177, 183 (pp.164-71), and 192 (scientific 'discoveries'); and items nos. 19 (pp.43-89), 156, 159, 166, 183 (pp.150-4), 201, 256, and 257 (source hunting).

18. In Mémoires de l'Académie des sciences, inscriptions et belles-lettres de Toulouse, 10e série, VII, Toulouse, 1907.

de Rabelais'.<sup>19</sup> Must to examine Lachèvre's footnotes is to perceive attitudes representative of all such research methods, and, in my view, illustrative of the fallacy of these when used to the exclusion of all others.

For Juppont, the Autre Monde contains anticipation of the following inventions or discoveries: the balloon and the parachute (cf. Enoch's ascent to the moon by means of two smoke-filled vessels, A.M., p.24, nn. 1,2); the deaf language (the language by bodily shaking of the lunar populace, A.M., p.39, n.2); the 'organic cell' - Toldo speaks of 'une divination des micro-organismes', Rémy de Gourmont of 'la phagocytose' (Cironalité universelle, A.M., pp. 71-3; p.71, n. 1, p.73, n.2); evolution (chance atomic formation of organisms, A.M., p.77, n.4); the conservation of energy theory (role of fire in the functioning of the organism, A.M. p.78, n.2); the electro-magnetic theory of light (the lunarians' heatless, fire-filled, glass bowls of light, A.M., p.82, n.3); X rays (Dyrcona's and his flying machine's diaphaneity in the solar atmosphere, A.M., pp. 134-5, p.135 n.1); and Wellsian circulation of spirit (universal circulation of matter, A.M., p.162, n.3). Ingenious as these comparisons are, they presuppose a notion of science itself as obsolete now as were, for Juppont, Toldo, and Lachèvre, many of Cyrano's ideas. One can understand why such comparisons were meaningful to them, since, like the Victorians, they conceive of science as a set of truths

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19. In Revue des études rabelaisiennes, IV, 1906, pp. 295-334; V, 1907, pp. 24-44.



which, once discovered, remain valid for all time. Cyrano would seem to represent for them a stage on the path to the knowledge extant in their own lifetime. However, even if we consider their research on a purely scientific basis, we shall have to question its validity, save perhaps as an example of attitudes typical of the late nineteenth, and early twentieth, century: Heisenberg's principle of uncertainty, the discovery of the neutron, and the theory of relativity suggest a universe which is not only infinitely relative but contains among its very laws a random principle.

If we were to adopt this scientific approach, we should perceive more similitude between Cyrano's vision of the universe and our own than between Juppont's mechanistic positivism and either. For today the 'presciences' would be quite different: say, relativity - Cyrano's infinite universe of an infinite number of worlds; the sensation attendant upon weightlessness in space - Dyrcona's gait on the sun's surface; and viro-immunology - cironalité universelle. Such an exercise uncovers the drawbacks of this type of criticism, which consists in the indulgence of one's own interests at the expense of the actual text in hand. Just as do Lachèvre's comments, it tells us more about the critic, and the predilection of his age, than it does about Cyrano.

Given that one's aim is to understand the work in hand, and not to measure it against one's own, individually graded yardstick, there would seem to be an essential critical norm which the critics so far mentioned fail to recognize: that one should not expect an author to adhere to aesthetic criteria, or to be acquainted with information or knowledge, of which he

was ignorant, or which did not exist at the time of his writing. Thus, we do not ask a writer of the classical period to write according to the cannon of Romantic drama, though we may choose to decline from being present at performances of his plays. In the case of Juppont and Lachèvre, the failure to establish a true historical perspective results in a distortion of Cyrano's text on numerous occasions: three examples will illustrate this.

Firstly, in respect of Cyrano's account of his hero's diaphanous appearance on his journey from sun-spot to sun, Juppont writes:

L'imagination débordante de Cyrano, guidée par son savoir, ... conçoit une extension du sens de la vue qu'il est difficile de ne pas comparer aux rayons Roentgen.<sup>20</sup>

However, if we examine the passage referred to in context, we are led to make no such comparison. Cyrano is at pains to distinguish between the effects of the solar atmosphere on the sentient human being as against the inanimate, man-made object;

Une difficulté peut embarrasser le lecteur, à sçavoir comment je pouvois me voir, et ne point voir ma loge, puis que j'estois devenu diaphane aussi bien qu'elle. Je répons à cela, que, sans doute, le Soleil agit autrement sur les corps qui vivent, que sur les inanimez, puis qu'aucun endroit, ny de ma chair, ny de mes os, ny de mes entrailles, quoy que transparens, n'avoit perdu sa couleur naturelle.<sup>21</sup>

Apart from the literal detail that X rays behave in the same way with regard to animate and inanimate objects, thus in-

20. Cited by Lachèvre, A.M., p.135, n.1.

21. A.M., pp. 134-5.

validating Juppont's analogy, this remark tells us nothing about Cyrano's text. Replaced in its historical context, the passage is highly relevant, reflecting quite different scientific problems: the question of the distinction, if any, between sentient and insentient matter was central to any atomic theory of matter; both Lucretius and Gassendi tackled the question in some detail, without being able to find any definite answer to it.

Juppont's enthusiasm in seeking out every possible analogy between Cyrano's descriptions and contemporary science tends in every instance, save that of the parachute principle (incidentally, already proposed by Leonardo), and of micro-organisms, to distort the meaning of the text: Cyrano does not fill Enoch's vessels with gas, but with smoke, emitted by 'divine fire', which has a natural attraction towards God: this method of ascent has little or no link with reality, but a lot with the tone of the story-telling at this point in the narrative; the whole point about the Lunarians' speech modes is that they possess two kinds, one for the élite and one for the populace, and it is this second, inferior language which Juppont wishes to equate with the deaf language (in any case, here, too, the analogy is false: the lunarian method uses the whole body, the deaf language, the hands only); it is debatable whether one should describe Darwinian evolution as 'chance' or 'random', for it obeys rules even if they are established a posteriori; or whether Cyrano's theory of the atomic formation of organisms contains any idea of progress

as does the theory of evolution.<sup>22</sup> The key word in the conservation of energy theory is 'energy', but the context of Cyrano's text is stated in it, viz. 'ce feu qui se meut de soy-mesme' (i.e. the fiery soul); the lunarians' bowls filled with heatless sun's rays has to do with Cyrano's image of the sun as a material body of fire, an idea pursued later in the Soleil which derives from sixteenth-century panpsychism; Cyrano's physics depends at every point on his assumption that all is material, including the fiery soul, so that 'Wellsian' circulating spirit seems irrelevant.<sup>23</sup> The preoccupation with the anticipation of later discoveries thus actually prevents the scholar from reading the work within the terms in which it was written.

The second main example of textual distortion involves a conscious and didactically orientated process: one has the feeling in reading Lachèvre's annotations that he has taken on the publication of Cyrano's work with the express purpose of warning the reader of its dangers. In other words, he is making sure that nobody should happen on the text unaware of its perniciousness. This leads him on the following occasion to fly in the face of his establishment of the text. The very idea that God could love man less than the cabbage is so horrific that it must be seen to be condemned; firstly, then, it is described as one of Cyrano's 'divagations'; then,

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22. This question is discussed below, ch. V (i) pp. 247-52.

23. On the role of fire and heat in Cyrano's universe see below, ch. II, and J.S. Spink's 'Libertinage et "spinozisme": la théorie de l'âme ignée' in French Studies, 1947, pp. 218-31.

Lachèvre adds in the next footnote: 'Depuis le début de ce paragraphe jusqu'ici c'est dans l'imprimé de 1657, nous le répétons, la Nature qui est en cause et non pas Dieu'.<sup>24</sup>

In both of his editions of the Autre Monde, Lachèvre imputes the 1657 text to Lebret.

The third example involves a footnote in which Brun is quoted, and which illustrates the ephemeral nature of any judgement based on a greater interest in the curiosities of one's own day than in the text being considered. Of the cristal globes filled with glow-worms, which act as lamps, Brun had written: 'c'est le "lampire noctiluque" dont parle M. Henri Gadeau de Kerville, qui traite en un volume sérieux cette question ébauchée en riant par Cyrano'.<sup>25</sup> He had done so in a publication of 1890. One assumes that Lachèvre too knew of De Kerville; however, (this observation strikes as oddly today as does the categorisation of seventeenth-century playwrights of Phérotée de La Croix made in 1675: he places in the first rank writers such as Scarron, Scudéry, Tristan, and Cyrano; in the second, D'Aubignac, Benserade, Mairet, and Desmarest; in the third, the Corneille brothers, Quinault, and Racine.)<sup>26</sup> One cannot help drawing the conclusion that the value of criticism, like that of literature, may be, as Boileau

24. A.M., p.68, nn. 2 and 3.

25. A.M., p.82, no.1. The usual (dictionary) spelling is 'lampyre' (glow-worm); a 'noctiluca' is a phosphogenic protozoon which lives in water.

26. See his Art de la poésie française et latine cited by F. Lachèvre in Glanes bibliographiques et littéraires, Paris, 1929, II, p.106.

*Lach. is mistaken however for Phérotée de la Croix was merely establishing categories according to literary generations.*

argued of the latter, best judged by posterity. In Brun's statement, exactly the same premise is at work as in the research of Juppont: that modern judgements in the scientific field are the criterion for the assessment of the meaning and importance of Cyrano's text. It is this premise which I would question.

The scholar who specializes in the hunt for sources strives after the exactness of the scientist, yet, paradoxically, the more honest and painstaking is he, the less scientific are the results of his enquiry likely to appear. As Gustave Rudler points out, such a research project requires wide general reading of the period under scrutiny, so that no possible source escapes the notice of the researcher; for, the more he reads, the more 'sources' will undoubtedly reveal themselves. Rudler argues that to know of an author's sources is to be in a position to assess the originality of his works, or what Rudler describes as 'le talent de l'auteur'.<sup>27</sup> This is surely open to question, however, since, clearly, the so-called 'sources' on which the ultimate judgement is made are controlled by the scholar's knowledge, not by any fool-proof system by which we can sift out actual influences experienced by the author from the wealth of similitudes of which he knew nothing. Conversely, many ideas will remain devoid of sources not because of their originality, but rather on account of gaps in the documentation of the scholar; also, of course, many factors in an author's development are inaccessible, for the written

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27. Les Techniques de la critique et de l'histoire littéraires, Oxford, 1923, pp. 123-6 and 132-3.

word is but one of a host of them.

The uneven results achieved from this type of enquiry is exemplified in the polyvalent allotment of sources to the bird kingdom by Toldo: 'C'est évidemment à Aristophane, à la Néphélécocugie de Pierre Le Loyer que Cyrano est redevable de la description du Royaume des Oiseaux, sans oublier l'île des Oiseaux du V<sup>e</sup> livre de Pantagruel où les oiseaux mangent, boivent, disputent et jugent comme des hommes'.<sup>28</sup> For Samir Aziz Guirguis, whose doctoral thesis is wholly devoted to the subject of Cyrano's sources, this episode has other origins - in Lescarbot, Cartier, and Tristan.<sup>29</sup>

The thesis of Guirguis illustrates well the weakness of this critical approach when it is regarded as an end in itself. All those ideas, the origin of which has not been found, are ignored; all those which approximate to similar ones expressed by writers contemporaneous with or preceding Cyrano are assumed to derive from these similar ideas, however numerous such 'sources' may be for each given idea.

The Autre Monde is particularly prone to the attentions of source hunters, simply because the ideas contained in it are, in the main, a compendium of those of Cyrano's time. It would probably prove of more value to ascertain which of the commonplaces of the 1640s and early 1650s are not featured in the novels, for such an enquiry would reveal something of

28. Cited by Lachèvre, A.M., p. 147, n.2.

29. Les Sources des idées de l'Autre Monde de Cyrano de Bergerac, D.U.P., available in the library of the Sorbonne, press mark: W. Univ. 1957 (27) 40, ch. iv, 'Sources de voyages réels'.

Cyrano's preferences. Envisaged not so much as sources, but as part of a common fund of experience, awareness of similarities or associations between the Autre Monde and other writings contemporaneous with it can serve as a useful basis upon which to assess the import of Cyrano's fiction.

Of the hundred articles and books on Cyrano published between 1834 and 1960, which Cioranescu lists in his bibliography of seventeenth-century French literature,<sup>30</sup> less than a third concentrate on topics other than the biographical. Twenty are listed as purely biographical, but, in his section headed 'travaux d'ensemble', some seventeen items out of 26 published between 1905 and 1959, treat specifically of the comparison between the 'real' Cyrano and the legend; of these, ten are entitled 'le vrai Cyrano (or 'le véritable', 'the real', 'il vero'), and one 'Cyrano tel qu'il fut'. This interest constitutes the academic reply to Rostand's figment; yet, in 1897, when he put his 'Cyrano' on stage, there existed an already well-established legend.

There are three strands to the Cyrano of legend: the legacy of his contemporaries, the vision of him of the Romantics,<sup>31</sup> and Rostand's hero, the last an amalgam of the first and second with reminiscences of the lunar travels added to them. It is significant that Rostand produced Cyrano de Bergerac within four years of Brun's thesis. However much Rostand may have romanticized and adjusted the historical

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30. Bibliographie de la littérature française du 17<sup>e</sup> siècle, Paris, 1965, I, pp. 663-6, items 22747 to 22887 incl.

31. Gautier, op. cit., pp. 181-210 (originally published in 1834); Nodier, op. cit., pp. 71-112.



'facts', one wonders whether his imaginative creation is any less true than the academic ones. Certainly, the Letters would suggest a man less sentimental, far more incisive and humorous in disposition than the languorous poet enamoured of Roxane; yet Rostand does catch something of the spirit of Cyrano's work, which many of his academic detractors fail to do.

As Cioranescu's bibliography testifies, the major part of Cyranian criticism to date is biographical, the glitter of the legend tending to divert from the curiosities of the work. The legend itself seems to derive originally from the embarrassment felt by Cyrano's contemporaries - friends as well as enemies - in the face of the unorthodox elements in his thought. On the whole, they praised only Le Pédant joué, his only 'safe' work. Tallemant's questioning of Cyrano's sanity is linked with his feeling that his subject's tragedy is impious:

Un fou nommé Cyrano fit une piece de theatre intitulée: La mort d'Agrippine, où Séjanus disoit des choses horribles contre les dieux. La piece estoit un vray galimatias.... 'il y a de belles impietez'.<sup>32</sup>

In the Menagiana, Cyrano's strange behaviour provides at once evidence of his madness and an opportunity to associate it with the Lune:

'Les pauvres ouvrages, que ceux de Cyrano de Bergerac! ... On dit qu'il étoit encore en Rhétorique, quand il fit son Pédant Joué sur ce Principal [Granger]. Il y a quelque peu d'endroits passables, en cette piece, mais tout le reste est bien plat. Je crois que quand il fit son Voyage dans la Lune, il en avoit déjà le premier quartier dans la teste. Il est mort fou. La premiere marque qu'il

donna au public de sa folie, fut d'aller à la messe à la Mercy à midy en haut-de-chausses et bonnet de nuit, sans pourpoint.<sup>33</sup>

Even the two dedicatory poems of De Prades, in the Paris manuscript of the Lune, steer a mid-way course, clear of any real commitment.<sup>34</sup>

The wish to play down the more serious aspects of Cyrano's thought is apparent in the manner in which it is discussed by a man as well informed in contemporary science as Charles Sorel. In his Bibliothèque françoise of 1664, he mentions the Autre Monde, pointing out the reminiscences in it of Godwin's Gonzales, and even of the more scientific Dream of Kepler; yet, still he concludes that 'de tels caprices donnent beaucoup de plaisir à ceux qui les lisent'.<sup>35</sup> He may well have found his cue in Lebret's Préface, where, throughout, there exists a dichotomy between the philosophico-scientific and the imaginative writer.

Lebret emphasizes his friend's integrity of character and profundity of erudition, and defends, as though a serious proposition, the postulate that the moon is an inhabited earth, backing the contention by reference to Heraclitus, Xenophon, Anaxagoras, Godwin, Mersenne, Gilbert, Regius (Le Roy), and Patrizzi. Where Cyrano displays his exceptional merit, however, is in his ability to combine scholarship with the imagination of the true literary artist. Nowhere does Lebret mention the

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32. Amsterdam edition, 1693, p. 199.

34. Cited by Lachèvre, introduction A.M., p.lxxx.

35. Consulted in Paris, 1674 ed., p.171.

madness perceived by less charitable eyes, but he does envisage his friend's literary qualities in the same manner as had done De Prades and Sorel, believing that the 'gaieté' of Cyrano's prose is an inimitable asset, which tempers and enhances his erudite content. In treating of serious material comically, Cyrano behaves in the very opposite manner from the pedant:

M. de Bergerac ayant eu tant de grands hommes de son sentiment, il est d'autant plus à louer, qu'il a traité plaisamment une chimère dont ils ont traité trop sérieusement: aussi, avoit-il cela de particulier, qu'il croyoit qu'on devoit rire et douter de tout ce que certaines gens assurent bien souvent aussi opiniâtrément que ridiculement; en sorte que je lui ai oui dire plusieurs fois qu'il avoit autant de Farceurs qu'il rencontroit de Sidias... parce qu'il croyoit qu'on pouvoit donner ce nom à ceux qui disputent, avec la même opiniâtré, de choses aussi inutiles.<sup>36</sup>

It is this very chimerico-humorous quality which knits together the philosophical and the imaginative elements of his writings.

Whether or not the Lune and Soleil were intended to be classed as Histoires comiques (the Lune is not so termed in the manuscripts), they do bear the same mark of didactic narrative coated with humorous, sometimes gaulois, fantasy which characterizes a novel such as the Histoire comique de Francion of Sorel. Again, it is, perhaps, relevant that, in the body of the Lune, Cyrano describes the ministrations of his Socratic daemon to the moon philosophers in much the same terms as those used by Lebrét:

Pendant tout ce discours, je faisois signe à mon hoste qu'il taschoit d'obliger ces Philosophes à tomber sur quelque chapitre

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36. Lune, 1657 ed., Préface; cited from Lacroix ed., p.82.

de la science qu'ils professoient; ...  
 Je ne vous déduiray point ny les discours  
 ny les prières qui firent l'ambassade de  
 ce traité; aussy bien la nuance du  
 ridicule au sérieux fut trop imperceptible  
 pour pouvoir estre imitée'.<sup>37</sup>

The duality of Cyranian criticism, which ranges from Cyrano, the imaginative, fanciful, extravagant, mad author, at one extreme, to Cyrano, the serious, erudite, scientific thinker, at the other, is perceptible at least from Le Bret on, if not from Cyrano himself. In his works, the Letters and Le Pédant joué illustrate the former trait, La Mort d'Agrippine gives us a glimpse of the latter, and the Autre Monde marries the two in a work of morals.

Thus, the embarrassment felt by Brun at his hero's lapses, and the anger of Lachèvre, follow a pattern set in Cyrano's lifetime. In the eighteenth century, Benoît de Maillet, aware of the implications of the emergent worlds hypothesis, which he develops in his Telliamed, acknowledges a debt, by dedicating his book to 'the illustrious Cyrano de Bergerac. Author of the imaginary Travels through the Sun and the Moon'. 'I could not have made choice of a more worthy Protector of the Romantic Flights of Fancy which it [the Telliamed] contains'. De Maillet charges Cyrano with having 'inserted a great many Foolries into your description' plus 'some indecent Allusions and Reflections which savour of Libertinism'. Cyrano is 'extravagant'; where De Maillet's account of sea-tides is 'fabulous', that of Cyrano is 'ridiculous'. At each period, the serious-frivolous theme has been used to suit the commentator's purpose: De Maillet

gives the game away in his reference to libertinage; his primary aim is to protect himself.<sup>38</sup>

Only very recently, with the waning of social censure directed against non-Christian protestation, has the critic been able to free himself of timidity before the conclusions logically to be inferred from ideas such as those expressed in the Autre Monde, the Sorciers letters, and by a character like Séjanus.

Critics have conveniently labelled 'extravagant' or 'curious' also, all those ideas for which they have found no source, or of which they did not know the original context. By concentrating on French background reading to the exclusion of sixteenth-century Italian Naturalism, for example, many French critics in the past have attributed to a fervent imagination passages in Cyrano's novels which are but variations on Renaissance commonplaces. At the opposite extreme, and stemming largely from the same cause, Cyrano has been made to appear far more of a scientist, in the modern sense of that word, than he could ever have hoped to be. However distorted all these interpretations may appear when set against the text in its original intellectual habitat, they are all variations on the two critical themes just elucidated.

Yet, all these critics have confronted the text. Given the shifts in outlook of the critical eye, occasioned

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38. First ed., Paris, 1748, 'Dédicace'; the English renderings are taken from the London, 1750 edition.

by changes of sensibility and preoccupations from age to age, is there any controlling element in the text which might guide us? While making use of the external one of late sixteenth, and early seventeenth-century writings, I have tried throughout to bear in mind the tone of each part of Cyrano's work in conjunction with its content. If it be by means of tone that the audience's responses are controlled, then particularly is this true of the Autre Monde, where it is the tone rather than the intellectual content of an individual speech which provides a pointer to the outlook of the author as against that of the fictitious character who happens to be talking. In the Letters too, mood is all important, for both these series are 'in-jokes', probably created to amuse Cyrano's immediate circle of friends. On the other hand, both were felt to be sufficiently worthy as literary creations for the author to seek their publication over a period of at least six years (1648-1654), and this even to the point of retracting his professed intention never to be patronized (a legendary 'fact' which does seem to be borne out by the vision, evident in all his works, of homo sapiens as free in judgement and action).

At the outset, therefore, subsequent to an examination of the text, on which the main thesis depends, I have tried to characterize the roles of the various personages and episodes in the narrative of the Autre Monde, in order to assess the link between these and the ideas expressed in that work.

CHAPTER ITHE TEXT

This study consists in the main of an analysis of the text of the Autre Monde, yet doubt has been cast upon the usefulness of the first edition of the Lune because of its expurgated state, while two manuscript versions extant of the same novel are unsigned and undated. No manuscript copy of the Soleil has come to light. Both novels were published posthumously. There is more prima facie evidence for accepting as Cyrano's words the first editions of La Mort d'Agrippine, Le Pédant joué, and the Letters which were all published during the author's lifetime. Since we assume throughout that all these imaginative works go to make up Cyrano's vision of the universe, it is clearly desirable to establish at the outset just what each of the three versions of the Lune comprizes and the extent to which each represents the ipsissima verba of Cyrano. Given the apparent authenticity of the manuscript and printed versions of Le Pédant joué and the Letters, and of the first edition of La Mort d'Agrippine, I have examined the nature of these first, as a preliminary to the more complicated enquiry into the complexion of the Lune. On this basis I have then considered the text of the Soleil very much within the light of the content of the Lune.

- i. The text of La Mort d'Agrippine, Le Pédant joué, and the Letters.

In 1654 Charles de Sercy published La Mort d'Agrippine and, separately, under the collective title of Les Oeuvres diverses de Cyrano Bergerac, the bulk of Cyrano's letters with Le Pédant joué. The privilège of the tragedy was granted on the 16th December 1653, and includes mention of the letters; that of the Oeuvres diverses was granted shortly after on the 30th December 1653. In 1662 De Sercy published Les nouvelles Oeuvres de Cyrano Bergerac: these include ten letters hitherto unpublished.

No autograph manuscript or contemporary manuscript copy of the tragedy is known; there exists one manuscript copy comprizing Le Pédant joué and just under two thirds of the letters now extant: 41 out of 57.<sup>1</sup> This manuscript is available in the Bibliothèque nationale, ref. nouv. acq.fr. 4557.

It is difficult to ascribe the hand of the manuscript, which differs both from that of the Paris manuscript of the Lune (B.N., nouv. acq.fr. 4558), and from the only example of Cyrano's handwriting known, his signature of 1649 on a legal document.<sup>2</sup> We can compare this signature with the copying of his name at the end of some of the letters in the manuscript: in the lower case of the letter g in the attested signature the descender has no flourish, whereas in the manuscript the letters z, y, p, as

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1. Cf. Erba, L., pp. xxi-xxiv: 'Un problema minore: quante sono le lettere di Cyrano'.

2. Cf. Lachèvre, 1921 ed., I, p. lxxvi, and appendix A below.



well as g are always adorned with flourishes in the descenders. Otherwise, the writing does bear similarities. Of course, a signature is more apt to remain fixed in character than one's general hand; however, the variants of the manuscript compared with the 1654 printed text do, in some instances, suggest scribal errors unlikely to be perpetrated by the author, as the following examples will show:

'metamore' for 'métamorphosé' (L., p.40, ll. 23-4; fo. 208<sup>r</sup>).

'Monsieur' for 'Madame' (L., pp. 212, 214; fos. 113<sup>v</sup>, 115<sup>r</sup>, at letter head and end).

'rouges' for 'rousses' (L., p.48, l. 94; fo. 154, in 'Pour une Dame rousse'. The incorrect version is crossed out and the correction incorporated in the text).

'Mr. Jean' corrected in the body of the text to 'Mr. Jerssan' (L., p.76; fo. 183<sup>r</sup>).

No date is given in the manuscript for the Pédant joué, but the title page of the Letters, following immediately on it, is dated 1651 (fo. 94). About seventeen or so sheets of paper have been cut from the end of the manuscript, so that several of the letters originally copied in it may well have been removed; if so, it is not possible to guess at their identity, since the order of presentation of 1654 bears no relationship to that of the manuscript copy. Thirteen of the printed letters (of the combined 1654 and 1662 editions) do not feature in the manuscript; by contrast, seven of the ten letters of the 1662 edition are included there, while two letters of the manuscript published neither in the 1654 nor in the 1662 volumes were first published by Luciano Erba.<sup>3</sup>

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3. Cf. Erba's list, L., pp. xvii-xxi.

The date of composition of La Mort d'Agrippine is not known; no external evidence suggesting one has been found, nor is there any internal evidence strong enough to convince. That Séjanus should express sentiments on death almost identical with those with which the birds comfort Dyrcona in the Soleil might seem to indicate that both works were written at about the same time. There are strong arguments against this and like hypotheses however. In this instance the similar passages echo lines from Seneca's Troades well known and oft-quoted by libertin writers throughout the seventeenth century. For Naudé's teacher, Belurgey, it was reputed to have been a favourite text: though we do not know whether Cyrano knew Naudé at first hand, we do know that he admired him and that he knew his friend La Mothe le Vayer as well, probably, as Gassendi. It seems quite likely that Cyrano would repeat once or more than once, and possibly after a considerable lapse of time, an idea in keeping with his own philosophy of life and well received by his circle of acquaintances.<sup>4</sup>

A more general principle is involved here, for Cyrano repeats himself abundantly. A comparison of the letters, the Lune and the Soleil, reveals copious evidence of self imitation in ideas and imagery: proximity of content or style in itself implies no similar pattern of proximity in date.<sup>5</sup> An examination

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4. Cf. Agr., V, vi, ll. 1552-4, 1557-68; A.M., pp. 161-2: 'Ne t'afflige donc point....il y a mille siècles'. See J.S. Spink, 'Rochester, Dehénault, Voltaire and a chorus from Seneca's "Troades": Negation as a source of lyricism' in Problèmes des genres littéraires, vol. viii, Lodz, 1966, esp. pp. 9-10. Re Cyrano's admiration for Naudé see L., p. 183, ll. 315-6.

5. Cf. below, pp. 44-5.

of Cyrano's work from this standpoint has led me to two possible conclusions: either, he was engaged for a number of years on the composition of the two novels, the tragedy, the comedy, and the bulk of the letters, simultaneously, or alternatively, unconsciously or consciously, he resorted time and again to favourite tenets and literary visions. The second hypothesis is the more likely, and in keeping with the art of one part of his work - the letters - many of which, sustained by extended pointes, consist in multifarious, often incongruous, variations on a theme. The asymmetric pattern of self-repetition in the work as a whole simulates the technique of such letters as 'Pour une dame rousse', 'D'Un songe', or 'D'Un cyprès'. Conversely, his completely dissimilar attempts at one given subject, in the two letters entitled 'L'aqueduc ou la fontaine d'Arcueil', demonstrate his versatility in approaching a theme. A third possibility, a variant on the first, that Cyrano wrote the original version of each of his works at different periods, but then revised them altogether, taking material from one work and consciously exploiting it again elsewhere, is not borne out by the variants we possess.

It is generally assumed that Le Pédant joué was written in 1645, on account of two references in the text to the marriage of Marie de Gonzague to the king of Poland, which took place in Paris in that year. According to Lachèvre, the comedy was 'finished' and known publicly by 1649. There is no record of

any performance of the play during the author's lifetime.<sup>6</sup>

The manuscript copy is longer than the published version, but I have not managed to discern any pattern in the cuts, which amount to about one fifth of the copy. The most substantial deletion is that of the bulk of the final speech, which Lachèvre characterizes as 'Un couplet d'athéisme'.<sup>7</sup> An imagined dialogue between Granger and death personified in the garb of a physician, the speech expresses a defiance before the certainty and physical nature of death, and a rejection of any Christian reference in the moribund condition, which is reminiscent not only of the narrowly libertin posture, but also of the baroque poets' preoccupation with the material aspects of dying. In style and content, the dialogue resembles the parries of the duel; more in keeping with the attitude of a Séjanus than with the overall, frivolous, punning, and excessively academic, non-sensical humour of the rest of the play, this passage may well have been removed on account of its incongruity as much as for its daring. There are a number of deletions in the 1654 text of allusions to Christian dogma or to biblical information, but it is questionable whether any systematic attempt has been made to tone down dubious content.<sup>8</sup> It is unclear whether these,

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6. See P.J., II, iv, p.37: 'l'autre jour encore les Polonois eurent bien l'impudence d'enlever la Princesse Marie, en plein jour, à l'Hostel de Nevers, sans que personne osast branler'; V, x, p.88: 'Hé bien, ne scavez-vous pas.... Pièce à la Polonoise'. Cf. introduction P.J., p.5, pp. 6-7.
7. P.J., p.8.
8. Deletions of allusions to Christian tenets: P.J., p.31: 'je suis le Diable qui fit estocade avec Saint-Michel'; p. 77: 'c'est un beaume aussi souverain contre les Rodomonts que l'eau béniste contre les Diables'; p. 89: 'Néanmoins, comme nan dit, Jesu Maria et durôt sont deux biaux mots'; but contrast p. 49: 'le Livre de Solomon' is deleted, but not the burlesque reference to 'le manteau du Prophète Elie', and p.70, vt. a, where the 1654 version is more explicit than the manuscript in the reference to the forbidden fruit eaten by Eve.

or the deletions as a whole, were the work of Cyrano, De Sercy, or even of the corrector. That the author had no hand in them, however, is not ruled out, for the lack of any real pattern in the nature of the deleted material as compared with what is retained contrasts with the manner in which biblical allusion or disparaging remarks are toned down, or deleted, in the 1654 version of the Letters, and with the generally consistent nature of the expurgations of the Lune, as the rest of this section and the second section of this chapter will demonstrate.

The majority of the 1654 variants are stylistic, and consist in the substitution of an approximate synonym, a rearranged order, or a recast involving a rethinking of a phrase, or, less often, a sentence. These are evenly distributed over the play, in contrast to the deletions, the bulk of which occur towards the end of the work. *It is feasible that the stylistic variants were Cyrano's work, and the deletions either his, or the publisher's.*

Among a wealth of disconnected displays of erudition are the following ideas, also to be found in other imaginative works of Cyrano: the references to the diabolical, and, in particular, the speech of Corbinelli (IV, i) which is closely related in style and content with the final passage of the letter, 'Pour les sorciers'; also referred to in this speech is the daemon of Socrates, to become a far more important character in the Lune; the reluctance of the young man to 'soumettre mes plaisirs aux caprices d'un vieillard hébété' (deleted in the 1654 text), an attitude to the aged repeated in the letter entitled 'Consolation pour un de ses amis, sur l'éternité de son beau-pere' as well as in the most detailed treatment of the theme in the Lune. Despite the disparaging

tone of the letter in its criticism of old age, this particular idea, of the stupidity of the infantile stepfather, has been attenuated in the printed text, here showing a consistency with the editing of the Pédant joué. In the Lune, by contrast, while parts of a much longer development are recast or deleted, the reference to the father as 'Ce pauvre hébété, dont la neige de soixante hivers a glacé l'imagination' remains in the expurgated text of 1657.

Mention is made of the 'chou cabus', and of the 'ciron', two forms of life which are the protagonists in two major episodes of the Lune; Granger expatiates on the various roles of the apple in mythology and biblical history; Cyrano takes up the theme again in the earthly paradise episode in the Lune, and in the story of Pylades and Orestes ('les arbres amants') in the Soleil, at much greater length and depth.<sup>9</sup>

All these ideas, as expressed in the Pédant joué, are but a slight proportion of the text; however, they do illustrate the contention made above in respect of La Mort d'Agrippine, that Cyrano tends to repeat themes, while varying their role and importance, from one work to another. In general, the prose and tone of Le Pédant joué is alien to his other works; the frequent citations from, and skittish allusions to, manuals used in the collège, and, in particular, to the Latin grammar of Despautères,<sup>10</sup> together with the overpowering

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9. P.J., p.58, L., pp. 61-3, ll. 140-235; P.J., I. vii, p. 22, L., p.111, ll. 35-7 - ms. vt., A.M., pp. 61-5, 73-4; P.J., p.24, p.84, A.M., pp. 67-70, 71-3; P.J., pp. 69-70, A.M., pp. 20-32, 168-75.

10. P.J., p. 16, n. 1; p.18, n. 2; p. 23, nn. 1, 2; p.64, n. 5.

abundance of academic learning, would suggest that this play originated from the time when Cyrano was studying at the Collège de Beauvais, and that it is his earliest writing: this last surmise is supported, in some degree, by the comparisons just made, for it is far more likely that Cyrano would develop the themes briefly mentioned in the comedy, subsequent to its composition, rather than the reverse.

In his use of the pun, also, there would appear to be more cohesion between literary form and metaphorical components in the letters than in Le Pédant joué: while, admittedly, it is difficult to imagine quite how the actor would marry physical action with verbal wit, the pun, which is the mainstay of the comedy's dialogue, tends to hold up the progression of the plot, adding to the richness and local colour of the projected audience's experience rather than shaping it. Each speech is a world splaying out in a multitude of directions, linguistically determined. As a result, the action moves forward in leaps rather than interrelated steps. All too often purely linguistic associations, extraneous to the purported plot, are fashioned into an event, when, in fact, nothing whatever has happened: this does, of course, admirably represent pedantry, but conflicts with the dramatic form chosen to express it. This lack of progression contrasts with the use of the pointe in the letters: there, while the boundaries of normal linguistic usage are extended in every direction, there is, simultaneously, a movement forward from image to image. In this, the letters are much more stylistically sophisticated

than is the comedy, which seems to be very much an 'in-joke' among collégiens, lacking in a clearly stated central viewpoint, and characterized by its exuberant ostentation.

Cyrano introduces his letters, in a dedicatory letter to his patron, as 'un ramas confus des premiers caprices, ou pour mieux dire des premières folies de ma jeunesse'. He expresses shame at acknowledging them at the more advanced age of thirty four.<sup>11</sup> Yet, the care with which he adjusts and polishes them belies this apology. Again, while most of the letters are impossible to date, nine of them do seem susceptible to, at least, approximative chronological assessment; of these, six could not have been written before October 1646. Only one, 'Contre un poltron', in the version of the manuscript copy fits the description of the dedicatory letter: in it Cyrano writes, 'j'ay composé mon Epitaphe, dont la pointe est fort bonne, pourveu que je vive cent ans; et j'en ruinerois la rencontre heureuse, si je m'hazardois de mourir à vint deux'. In the printed edition the end of the sentence reads, 'de mourir plus jeune'. In addition, there are strong arguments for dating at least one of the twelve letters of the 1654 edition which do not feature in the manuscript as late as 1652: in a recent article, by Ann Marsak, a good case is made out for situating the events referred to in 'Contre les frondeurs' in July 1652 (the second siege of Paris, during

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11. L., p. 3.



the Frondes).<sup>12</sup> Obviously, one cannot draw conclusions as to the proportion of letters composed in Cyrano's youth from data which concerns less than a quarter of those published in 1654, and less than a fifth of the total number extant. That there is much false modesty in his letter to the duc d'Arpajon, however, is borne out by the variants; these witness to a much more careful, systematic, and extensive revision than that of Le Pédant joué. In both, there is one similarity, in the consistency of variants involving synonyms and alterations of

12. The six letters written after October 1646 are as follows (ms titles): 1. 'A Mr. Gerzan', L., p.79, n.: the subject of the letter, the 'triomphe des dames', refers to the work of that name first published by Mr. Gerzan in Oct. 1646; 2. 'Contre le sieur de Tage', L., p. 106, ll. 26-7, in the ms; Cyrano refers to 'Cléopâtre et Cassandre', novels by La Calprenède: the first volume of Cléopâtre was published in 1647 (not, as Erba states, L., p. 109, in 1646); 3. 'Contre les Sorciers', L., p. 72, l. 224, and p. 75, n., ref. to 'la fille d'Evreux' (Madeleine Bavant) as a supposed sorceress; she was condemned on 24 Aug. 1647; 4. 'Contre le gras Montfleury', L., p. 122, ll. 48-9, in the ms; Cyrano refers to 'le grand Asdrubal' (Montfleury's play, La Mort d'Hasdrubal), first published in 1647 - date of composition not known; 5. 'Sur le faux-bruit qui courut, de la mort de Mr. le Prince', L., p. 223, n., Lachèvre has argued convincingly that the battle in question is that of Lens, 1648; 6. 'Contre Soucidas', L., p. 100, ll. 17-21, allusion to Dassoucy's Ovide en belle humeur, first published Feb. 1650; p.101, ll. 27-8, ref. to Le Jugement de Paris as though already published - i.e. 1648 on. The three letters published earlier than 1646 are as follows: 1. 'Contre un Poltron', L., p.90, l. 89, p. 88, l. 55; 2. 'Sur un hipocondre heroique de Roman', L., p. 152, l. 5, p. 153, n., there is reference to Gassion as alive - he died in 1647; 3. 'D'Un Songe' (no ms version), L., p. 173, n., Erba quotes Lachèvre's dating, viz. 1644, the purported year of publication of Mr. de la Geneste's French translation of Quevedo's Visions; this is misleading: the B.N. catalogue lists the following years of publication of its copies of this translation: 1632, 1635, 1638, 1641, 1644, 1645, 1649. Re the dating of 'Contre les frondeurs' see A. Marsak, 'Cyrano de Bergerac and the Fronde: a question of date' in French Studies, vol. xxviii, Jan. 1974, no. 1, pp. 12-19.

phrases on purely stylistic grounds. A consideration of the nature of the variants will reveal something of Cyrano's methods of preparing a text for print (it would seem fair to impute the alterations to him, since they were executed prior to his illness); also, it will serve as auxiliary evidence in the later examination of the 1657 first edition of the Lune.

A differentiation is observable between the revisions of the letters from the manuscript which appear in the 1654 as against the 1662 editions. The variants of the letters published during Cyrano's lifetime are extensive; those of the Nouvelles Oeuvres, negligible. With the exception of the first of the 1662 letters, the only difference between manuscript and printed versions are orthographical, or grammatical. No attempt at stylistic polishing, or at censorship of content, has been made. In the first letter, 'A Monsieur \*\*\*\*. Sur le faux bruit qui courut de la mort d'un grand Guerrier' (1662 title) all references to the status of the recipient have been translated into less specific descriptions, viz.: 'Prince' to 'grand guerrier'; 'mon Prince' to 'ce genereux Capitaine'; and to 'cet Invincible'; 'mon Duc' to 'ce vaillant homme'.<sup>13</sup> This trend concurs with the practice of the 1654 revisions: There, while the names of Le Bret (letters I - IV), of Mr. de Gerzan (letter XIV) are retained in the Lettres diverses, as are those of Dassoucy - as Soucidas - and Scarron, and as well as the introduction of the name of 'un ecclesiastique bouffon' for

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13. L., p. 221, title and l. 10; p. 223, ll. 65-6; l. 70; I. 77.

Messire Jean), in the Lettres satiriques in general, names are omitted, and specific disparaging information toned down or even completely deleted.<sup>14</sup> Thus it would seem clear that, with the probable exception of the first of the seven letters of the manuscript reproduced by De Sercy, Cyrano did not wish to publish them in 1654, but neither did he discard them completely by destroying them; he has made no attempt to re-work them between 1651 and 1653, and this in direct contrast to the thirty-four letters from the manuscript published in 1654.<sup>15</sup>

14. Names are deleted from the titles of five letters in the 1654 edition as compared with the ms, viz: L., p. 105, p. 110, p. 114, p. 117, p. 121; all are Lettres satyriques. By contrast, Messire Jean is named in 1654, and not in the ms (L., p. 134); in Le Pédant joué the opposite occurs: P.J., p. 27, vt. c, 'Messire Jean' (ms) to 'Monsieur le Curé' (1654). E.g.s of denigratory information attenuated in 1654 version: 1. L., pp. 95-7 ('Contre une femme intéressée' - 'A Mademoiselle', 1654), almost one third of the letter is recast to remove the inference that the recipient's favours were granted only to those who showered gold upon her, and that they were so afforded to 'un Juste', the series of puns interdependent with this making clear the reference here to Louis XIII; 2. L., 'Contre Soucidas', p. 101, ll. 26-32; p. 103, ll. 82-3; though the attack on Dassoucy remains barbed, the open accusation of plagiary is removed; the text has been completely recast and shortened.
15. The nature of the letters may explain the decision not to include them in the 1654 text: five are amorous, they may have been sifted from the six remaining from the manuscript which do feature; if the first of the later, 1662, published letters ('Sur le faux-bruit...') was indeed addressed to Condé in 1648, then, given Cyrano's own change of allegiance, politically, by 1652, this letter would have been an embarrassment (cf. deletion of reference to the thirty years' war in the 1657 Lune, A.M., p.56); the seventh letter, 'Pour Soucidas', conflicts with the vituperative 'Contre Soucidas', retained in 1654. The remaining three letters of 1662, not in the manuscript, are of the same pattern: two are love letters, the third, 'Sur le blocus d'une ville', in Lacroix's opinion, relates to the 1639 siege of Mouzon (cited Erba, L., p. 236, n.)

As well as the removal or attenuation of material of a libellous character, there does seem to be a consistent attempt to tone down passages with biblical connotations, or those which question the omnipotence of God. In general, the context is not stripped of its religious stamp, however. The following examples are fairly typical, and manifest the same technique as that used in the secular contexted revisions:

In 'Contre l'automne' (L., p.24, ll. 26-8), in a passage concerning the fatal terrors of autumnal lightning, there is in the manuscript a clearly stated criticism of divine justice, viz.:

admirez un peu je vous prie, le bel ordre  
de cette Justice, un miserable meurt, on l'enterre,  
ce cadavre pouri dans son linceul, s'exale à  
travers le gazon de sa Fosse, il monte, et se va  
loger dans une nuë, ou s'étant endurci par le  
choc; Il crevera peut estre au pied d'un autel  
sur la teste de son fils qui prioit pour son ame.  
(fo. 108)

The idea of the transposition of matter, implying no personal immortality, and that of the harshness of so-called divine justice, is removed completely, and the passage shortened by a recast which retains only the sequence of the original: that lightning and divine justice are inter-related; the above manuscript passage was introduced by the proposition that 'ce tintamare [de tonnerre]' constitutes 'les instrumens de la Justice de Dieu'; the revised text substitutes for the whole development:

Mais quand l'injustice de cent mille coups  
de Tonnerre seroit une production de la  
sagesse inscrutable de Dieu ...

Curiously, both versions exploit a pagan association (Zeus-lightning) in a Christian context, the 1654 variant showing no effort to replace the idea in its original habitat.

In 'Pour une dame rousse', Cyrano draws on source material from manifold civilisations and mythologies, arguing that all have some connection with 'rousseur'; among these, he includes some of the central figures of the Judao-Christian tradition: Adam, Christ, and Judas. (L., p. 48, pp. 119-21). Manuscript and variant read as follows:

ms. fo. 155

1654

Adam fut rousseau, Jesus Cr<sup>ist</sup> fut rousseau; Judas mesme eut l'honneur d'estre l'instrument de nostre salut, et de baiser le Messie en le trahissant, a cause qu'il étoit rousseau; et Dieu ne le reprouva, que fâché de voir qu'un homme qui n'étoit que son estafier, fût cependant plus rousseau que lui.

Adam qui créé par la main de Dieu mesme, devoit estre le plus accomply des hommes, fut rousseau.

While Christ and Judas are deleted, mention of Adam remains; essentially, it is the notion that God could be surpassed by one of His creatures in a given quality that is cut out.

Both the above examples show that it is not so much reference to revealed religion which is considered unsuitable for publication as the suggestion that God can be criticized, that He can make errors of judgement; particularly in the second instance, Cyrano, by burlesquing, has, in effect, reduced the Christian deity to the ridiculous stature afforded the pagan gods in works such as his former friend, Dassoucy's Ovide en belle humeur. In the printed edition, Adam

regains his commonly understood role of first, God-created, man, while the passage loses its bite. The Lune contains many similar passages, particularly in the earthly paradise episode; in the main, the expurgated first edition of 1657 witnesses to more radical treatment, such references to biblical personages being removed altogether. The technique of revision, apart from this, however, is the same, as the next section of this chapter will demonstrate.

Stylistic variants, of substantial passages as well as, more consistently, of single words or groups of words, show the same ability to rethink an image or development while retaining its basic elements and nub as is evident in the recasting necessitated by unacceptability of content. This dexterity reflects the same versatility as does Cyrano's conception of the pointe: in letters such as 'D'un cyprès', 'D'un songe', or 'A Mr. Gerzan, sur son Triomphe des Dames', the function of the pointe is ideologico-linguistic, serving at once as the central axis on which all depends and as the expression of a world in which, through the associations of language, all is unstable, just because its very credibility is guaranteed only by a verbal relationship. The fifth and seventh Lettres amoureuses (1654 order, L., pp. 208-9, pp. 212-4), illustrate this; in both, the 1654 version reiterates the structure and images of the manuscript text, yet Erba has been forced to reproduce the manuscript in its entirety, since the variants involve the whole of each letter. The pointe makes the variations on a theme seem limitless; an accident,

Cyrano's loss of his first letter describing the aqueduct or fountain of Arcueil, and his recovery of it subsequent to his having composed a second letter on the subject, shows how this approach to reality coheres with Cyrano's approach to writing, for the two letters are quite distinct.<sup>16</sup>

- ii. The text of L'Autre Monde ou Les Etats et Empires de la Lune.

The first edition of the Lune was published posthumously in 1657 by Charles de Sercy under the title: Histoire comique par M. de Cyrano Bergerac, contenant les Etats et Empires de la Lune. The edition is headed by a dedicatory letter written by Lebret to Tanneguy Renault des Boisclairs, followed by a preface, again imputed to Lebret, in which the life, achievements, scholarship, and friends of Cyrano are traced. The text, which contains seventeen suspension marks, is acknowledged to be incomplete by Lebret, who suggests that he received the manuscript in this state.<sup>17</sup> I shall refer to this edition as 'E'.

The various editions of the Lune subsequent to the 1657 one differ in some respects, but all are basically the same,

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16. L., pp. 29-36.

17. 1657 ed. (E), third and fourth sides of the Preface, which is unsigned and not paginated.

the variations probably occurring at the printing stage.<sup>18</sup>

From 1657 until the early 1860s no version other than the expurgated one was known of the Lune; in 1861, Monmerqué's collection was sold; among it, a manuscript of the Lune, which was purchased by a Mr. Deullin, and given by him, in 1890, to the Bibliothèque nationale (nouv.acq.fr. 4558). This manuscript will be referred to throughout the rest of this chapter as 'P'.

In 1908, Leo Jordan discovered a second manuscript in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, which had been catalogued as anonymous. It had been acquired from the Palatinate district of Germany (present press mark: no. 420, gall. 419). This manuscript will be referred to as 'M'.<sup>19</sup>

18. The following variants have been found in the seventeenth-century editions of De Sercy consulted: 1. In the five sets of musical notation in the text (A.M., pp. 55, 78 - two sets, 82, 85) the corresponding sets of M and P concur, but differ in E; the 1661 edition has no music - it is replaced by suspension marks. If we accept Lachèvre's reading of the 1659 version (which differs from Jordan's) then the 1659 edition is copied in the case of the first three sets of music in the 1676 and 1681 editions (the second a reprint of the first), but the last two sets have been cut out. As it is not possible to interpret this notation with any certainty musically (cf. numes), it seems probable that it is largely of ornamental value. 2. Re A.M., p. 83, vt. a: M (fo. 97<sup>v</sup>) and P (fo. 125<sup>v</sup>) read 'Les Estats et Empires du Soleil'; E reads 'Les Estats et Empires du Soleil avec une addition de l'Histoire de l'Estincelle'. (Lachèvre's reading of P is inaccurate). All the later editions print 'Lune' for 'Soleil' but retain the 'addition'. 3. Re A.M., pp. 84-5: in the 1665 and 1676 (and 1681) editions two paragraphs are omitted, running from 'Lors que j'eus reflechi' to 'personnes tristes'. Cf. also, below, p. 98 ; n. 69.

19. See Leo Jordan, 'Ein neues Manuskript von Cyranos L'Autre Monde' in Zeitschrift für das Studium neueren Sprachen und Literaturen, vol. cxxii (1909), p.64.



The first unexpurgated edition of the Lune was published by Jordan in 1910.<sup>20</sup> He uses M, P, and the second, 1659, edition.

When Frédéric Lachèvre published his edition of the Autre Monde, basing the Lune on P with variants from M and the first edition - E, he describes it as 'le texte non expurgé de l'Autre Monde, publié intégralement pour la première fois en France, d'après les manuscrits de Paris et de Munich'. As he does not mention Jordan in this edition, but does so in the 1933 Garnier one, it would seem likely that he was unaware of the existence of the earlier establishment of the text in Germany;<sup>21</sup> it is, thus, from 1921 that the full text of the Lune was readily accessible to the French reading public.

A third manuscript is referred to, but not used, by Lachèvre. He describes it as 'ex meis', thus providing us with a mystery; for, if in his possession, why did he not use it in establishing his text? His portrayal of the manuscript may suggest the answer:

Ce Ms., de la fin du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, a appartenu au chirurgien Ant. Louis ... qui l'a acheté en 1765 et qui a noté sur la garde: "L'auteur d'un bout à l'autre sent le fagot et M. de Voltaire, avec la Philosophie de l'Histoire et son Dictionnaire politique, n'est qu'un réchauffeur". - Le texte est celui de Munich, avec une meilleure orthographe et sans les fautes grossières de ce dernier'<sup>22</sup>

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20. Savinien de Cyrano Bergerac's L'Autre Monde ou les Etats et Empires de la Lune, Dresden, 1910, printed for the Gesellschaft für romanische Literatur, Band 23.
21. Lachèvre, 1921 ed., I, p. xvi; Jordan's edition is listed in the bibliography of the Garnier edition.
22. 1921 ed., II, p.314.

Given that his manuscript copy added nothing to M, and is indeed the younger, then it is superfluous; given its superior spelling, and lesser number of 'errors', one could argue that it would have the advantage in comprehensibility.

Lachèvre also states that the third manuscript 'provient de la collection Philipps, de Londres'. In order to establish its ownership, I have tried to trace it from the time when it belonged to the Phillipps collection, but could not do so further than 1903.<sup>23</sup> I have also consulted <sup>the</sup> catalogue for the sale of Lachèvre's library, which took place subsequent to his death at the Hôtel des Ventes de Versailles, from the 8th to 10th October 1957; this manuscript does not feature in it.<sup>24</sup> No external evidence has been found, therefore, to prove that Lachèvre had the manuscript to hand in the period preceding 1921: it could well be that, while he owned it, he did not have it available to consult, given the circumstances of wartime. However, there are no real grounds for believing any one of these surmises to hold greater credence than any other.

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23. See Phillipps collection catalogue in B.M., press-mark Tab. 436, b. 13, first section, 1837, p.9, Codices Manuscripti Ex Bibliotheca M. Chardin, Parisiis, item 799, described as 'Les Empires de la Lune, 4to'; no author is ascribed. According to the records of A.N.L. Munby, historian of the Phillipps collection, this manuscript was sold at Sotheby's in 1903, lot no. 724, to Percy Bobell & Son, 24, Mount Ephraim Rd., Tunbridge Wells, an antiquarian bookshop. The present owner, R. J. Dobell, says that 'the early records of my house were destroyed and I have not been able to trace the sale of this ms or its present whereabouts'.
24. See Bibliothèque de M. Frédéric Lachèvre, catalogued at the B.N. under 'inventaire 8<sup>o</sup> Δ 47900'. 618 items were for sale, including three mss.

That the manuscript is a copy of M, while unverifiable, is circumstantially supported by the description of it in the Phillipps catalogue, where it is described as 'ex bibliotheca M. Chardin, Paris'. For, the catalogue also informs us that Chardin's collection, dispersed in Paris between 1806 and 1824, and from which Phillipps bought items in the second sale, contained 'a number of mss. from the famous library of the Augustinians at Rebdorf, in Bavaria, some of whose books passed at the secularization to the State-library at Munich and the Town libraries of Augsburg and Eichstatt'.<sup>25</sup>

Jordan's and Lachèvre's (1921) editions remain the most comprehensive and accurate; both give the variants of M and P, but the method of textual establishment differs. Jordan did not know of the existence of any copy of E, for, using a 1659 copy, he claims it to be 'the oldest extant print'. While his scholarship is impeccable, he differs from present-day editorial practice, in establishing a composite text, selected according to his judgement of the 'best' version. On the grounds that P is a copy of a manuscript intended for printing (since it contains two dedicatory poems), he gives this precedence:

P as the single preserved ms made for printing is ... to be given the greater weight. If M and P agree as against D (i.e. 'Druck': 1659 ed.), then the reading of the mss is chosen. If M and D agree against P, then M and D have the reading of the lost definitive 'print ms'. If all three versions differ, then save for a good reason, we shall not depart from the reading of P.<sup>26</sup>

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25. Phillipps catalogue, vol. II, p.23.

26. Ed. cit., p.25, p.34.

So complex are his principles, that it is only with difficulty that the reader may reconstitute any one of the three source texts.

Despite the shortcomings of the editorial comment, the 1921 Lachèvre edition is preferable to Jordan's on the following grounds:

1. The 1657 text is used, which, being based on, if not wholly faithful to, Cyrano's *manuscript* (i.e. the one in the hands of Lebret), is preferable to any later edition. (The variants of later editions do not appear to be more accurate than E).
2. The text is based on one version -P- which is clearly distinguished; where M contains material not in P, this is added to the main text, but marked by square brackets. (The variants of M and E appear at the bottom of each page).
3. The passages, phrases, and words, which do not feature in E (from M and P), are printed in italics, thus making the text of E accessible.
4. The French edition combines Lune and Soleil in one volume; Jordan's contains only the first work.
5. The Lachèvre edition has always been more readily available than the German one, and, probably for this reason, is generally regarded as the standard edition.

Lachèvre's smaller 1933 Garnier edition is based on E with, in the body of the text, the additions of P, and in footnotes, the extra material of M. This arrangement would seem to have less to recommend it than either of the editions just compared. It is for all these reasons that I have used the 1921 Lachèvre edition for reference, unless otherwise stated. When I have quoted specifically from M, P, or E, however, I have adopted the spelling of the relevant source, save for the substitution of j, v, or u for i, u, or v respectively, <sup>where this</sup> is the modern custom. Where felt necessary, to aid understanding, in quoting from the manuscripts I have resorted to the punctuation of Lachèvre's edition.

Before discussing the content of the novel, it would seem necessary to try to establish the ipsissima verba of Cyrano. What are the characteristics of M and P? What grounds are there for assuming them to be more accredited as the renderings of Cyrano than E? Has E been 'mutilated' by Lebret, and that beyond recognition, as the consensus of critics maintains? Since we possess no external evidence as to the nature of the original manuscript of the Lune and no manuscript that corresponds sufficiently with E to have been the one used by Lebret or De Sercy, then internal evidence, arrived at through a comparison of these three texts, will serve as the basis of the choice of text.

M is an incomplete copy, and thus, presumably the work of a scribe without access to the author. At least two spaces have been left deliberately, their length tallying with the text equivalent to the missing words in P.<sup>27</sup> The spelling tends to be erratic, and there are many mistakes in transcription, some of which could have a sound - sense confusion as their origin; despite its not being seventeenth-century practice to transcribe through dictation, Jordan gives the impression that he imputes such variants to this cause.<sup>28</sup> The handwriting is not as even or as carefully executed as in P; throughout, M bears the marks of a hurried job, perfunctorily executed.

P is written in a neat hand, which differs from those of M, of ms.4557 - Le Pédant joué and Letters, and of Cyrano's signature.<sup>29</sup> The orthography follows the practice of the majority of learned French hands in the seventeenth century, in contrast to M, where some letters appear to be formed in a Germanic manner.

P contains twenty-eight emendations. At least nine of these are probably effected by Monmerqué (or Deullin), for

27. M, fo. 16<sup>r</sup>, 'il y fust Enlevé de la mesme sorte ..... Imagination fortement tendue'; cf. P, fo. 22<sup>v</sup>, 'il y fut enlevé de la mesme sorte qu'il s'est veu des philosophes. Leur imagination fortement tendue'. M, fo. 63<sup>r</sup>, 'anavoir pas vos..... vous le forcerez'; P, fo. 85<sup>r</sup>, 'a n'avoir que vos visions vous le forcerés'. See appendix A below.
28. E.g. ed. cit., p.27, vt. M, fo. 101<sup>r</sup>: 'la glace de ses sens' (E: 'la glace de ses ans', but P, fo. 130<sup>v</sup> has 'la glace des ans'), described as a 'Hörfehler'. Cf. ibid., p. 134, vt. 2: M, fo. 23<sup>r</sup>, 'Et ce tout', P, fo. 32<sup>v</sup>, 'Il se teut'. Cf. also, M, fo. 31<sup>v</sup>, 'un herault'; P, 44<sup>r</sup>, 'un heros' (neither Jordan nor Lachèvre record this variant).
29. Cf. appendix A below.

the ink is blacker and/or they are written in a different hand. One of these (fo. 39<sup>v</sup>) is in the same hand as a remark on the flyleaf of the manuscript, usually attributed to Monmerqué.<sup>30</sup> Seven are clearly in the scribe's hand (folios 6<sup>v</sup>, 20<sup>v</sup>, 23<sup>r</sup>, 34<sup>v</sup>, 56<sup>r</sup>, 71<sup>v</sup>, 79<sup>r</sup>), and four appear to be in similar ink (14<sup>r</sup>, 25<sup>v</sup>, 26<sup>r</sup>, 48<sup>v</sup>). I have not been able to categorize the remaining corrections with any certainty.<sup>31</sup>

Two of the scribal revisions, contained within the main flow of the text, provide the strongest of all the arguments put forward, for not attributing this manuscript to Cyrano's own hand, or to his direct supervision: the first (25<sup>r</sup>), suggests that the scribe misconstrued 'l'horoscope' as 'l'holocauste', and, realizing his mistake, corrected himself in mid-stream, for it reads, 'Les influences favorables qu'el les inspirent sur les holo \_\_\_\_\_ L'horoscope de Louys le Juste' (barred out part underlined). The second consists in a mistaken reading of 'lune' for 'nuë', the correction following immediately on the misreading (71<sup>v</sup>); while this is not a stupid reading, it, like the previous one, is most unlikely to have been perpetrated by the author.

Jordan argues that the M archetype predates the P one. Of his arguments the following are, in my opinion, most convincing:

1. P is headed by two poems of Royer de Prade

30. The full text which appears on the fly-leaf is reproduced by Jordan, *ed. cit.*, p.17. The nine emendations are on the following folios: 22<sup>v</sup>, 39<sup>v</sup>, 47<sup>v</sup>, 48<sup>r</sup>, 54<sup>r</sup>, 57<sup>v</sup> ('l' Auteur les porte'), 64<sup>r</sup>, 72<sup>r</sup>, 74<sup>v</sup>.

31. Viz. those on folios 6<sup>r</sup>, 25<sup>r</sup>, 34<sup>r</sup>, 45<sup>v</sup>, 52<sup>r</sup>, 53<sup>r</sup>, 57<sup>v</sup> (quand on en a composé), 73<sup>r</sup>.

dedicated to the author of the Lune;

M is not, i.e., P archetype was intended for the printer, M was probably handed round among friends.

2. At the end of the earthly paradise episode Elias dismisses Dyrcona as an impious ridiculer of saintly things, on the basis of the immediately preceding speech of Dyrcona, characterized as 'tout ce discours'. Yet, in P this 'discours' is a sentence; M is four times longer here, and Dyrcona's account contains an imagined admission by God that He has made a mistake. Both the description 'discours' and the horror of Elias tally with M, not P.<sup>32</sup>

Over the text as a whole, M and P bear more resemblance to each other than either to the posthumous edition (equally true for the 1659 as the 1657 one), though it does share variants with each of the manuscripts. On the whole, however, E has more in common with P than with M.<sup>33</sup> To paint a rounded picture, I think it should also be said that many of the variants, being often but a word, or phrase, and synonymous, may well be the result of copying. Notwithstanding, there are few examples of

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32. Ed. cit., pp. 19-25 and, on point 2, A.M., p. 31.

33. In the following cases E coincides with M: A.M., pp. 68, vt. k; 69, vt. i; 70, vt. d; 76, vt. i; 81, vt. j; the last constituting a substantial phrase not in P.



substantial passages where E and M agree against P.<sup>34</sup> Thus, while M is an earlier version than P, and while P could, perhaps, be a print manuscript copy, there is no single clear progression from M to P to E. The manuscript of E may well have been the result of a revision incorporating the M and P archetypes.

P is shorter than M in the first few pages; by contrast, towards the end of the novel, in the young philosopher's diatribe against personal immortality and the resurrection, P is longer and more explicit than M. In both cases, M is a terser, clearer, narrative.<sup>35</sup>

Apart from the deletion of the major elements in Dyrcona's speech prior to his expulsion from the earthly paradise, the passages and phrases of M not reproduced in P do not contain impious ideas;<sup>36</sup> the decision to omit them probably stemmed from stylistic and narrative considerations. The nature of the emendations in the final episode of the novel, in P, are of particular interest, if the P archetype was indeed a print manuscript: stylistic questions have taken second place to the wish to clarify and to accentuate the meaning in every

34. Cf. Jordan's examples, ed. cit., pp. 26-7, where most variants are synonyms and only two substantial, viz. E and M: 'Entrainer mes yeux...dessus', missing in P; P, fo. 91<sup>r</sup>: 'et que jamais... luy ressembler', not in M and E.

35. Cf. Jordan, ed. cit., pp. 21-2.

36. Viz. A.M., p. 6, 'Je le reconnus.... plus d'un an': conversation between Dyrcona and his Lorrainer laquais as to how Cardano's work happened to be open on the desk; the narrative is more succinct without this passage. A.M., p.10 'Car ils estoient nuds'. A.M., p.23, 'du Ciel' (cf. P, fo. 22<sup>v</sup>, crossed out in P: looks like a later deletion, in blacker ink; probably Monmerqué?). A.M., p.27, immediately after vt. o: 'le Paradis terrestre' (Lachèvre's reading of P is incorrect).

detail; this has lengthened the narrative by some 500 words. Since this is the most libertine part of Cyrano's work, and the closest he comes to atheism, this revision is telling, because unexpected. Indeed, this feature of P alone must cast doubt on Jordan's assumption that this copy is based on a print manuscript.

In the last paragraph of the variant dénouement of E, Dyrcona informs the reader:

j'ai prié M. Le Bret, mon plus cher et mon plus inviolable ami, de les (mes études et mes travaux) donner au public, avec l'Histoire de la République du Soleil, celle de l'Estincelle, et quelques autres ouvrages de mesme façon, si ceux qui nous les ont dérobez les luy rendent.

This ending concurs with the preface, and with the traditional belief that Le Bret, who in 1656 had become ordained, published a novel which expressed a view of life with which he could no longer agree, solely because of a death-bed promise. (Many of these same critics have, nevertheless, questioned whether it was not Le Bret who composed the variant dénouement on which their argument depends).

In the preface, Le Bret specifically states that he had not presumed to tamper with Cyrano's work, despite the incomplete state in which it was handed over to him:

J'avoue toutefois que si j'eusse eu le temps, ou que je n'y eusse pas préveu de tres-grandes difficultez, j'aurois volontiers examiné la chose de sorte qu'elle t'auroit semblé peut-estre plus complete: mais j'ay apprehendé d'y mettre ou de la confusion ou de la difformité, si j'entreprendois d'en changer l'ordre, ou de suppléer à quelques

lacunes, par le meslange de mon stile au sien, dont ma melancolie ne me permet pas d'imiter la gayeté, ny de suivre les beaux emportemens de son imagination, la mienne à cause de sa froideur estant beaucoup plus sterile. C'est une disgrace qui est arrivée à presque tous les ouvrages posthumes, ou ceux qui se sont donné le soin de les mettre au jour ont souffert de semblables lacunes dans la crainte ... de ne pas quadrer à la pensée de l'Autheur.

Yet modern critics are unanimous in imputing to Lebret the expurgations, if not the stylistic alterations, of E. Again, they all agree that these omissions, consisting as they do in the most daring of Cyrano's ideas, render the novel obscure, 'mutilated', and, for some, even incomprehensible. Of them all, Jordan is probably the most willing to explore the possibility of both restyling and deletion of material having been the work of Cyrano himself; he, too, however, decides that the posthumous text is 'a wretched, and in some ways, incomprehensible fragment, more the work of Lebret than of Cyrano'. He does not make clear whether, in the final analysis, he believes the stylistic changes to be the responsibility of Cyrano or Lebret.<sup>37</sup> Despite the weight of opinion, no certain evidence to back it up has been produced; given the insistence of Lebret, should we not examine the whole question of the

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37. Jordan, ed cit., p. 8; cf. also, his discussion of this problem, pp. 28-34. Lachèvre is wholehearted in imputing the expurgations to Lebret: A.M., p. xcvi; cf. A. Lavers, 'La croyance à l'unité de la science' in Cahiers du Sud, no. 347 (1958), p.407; E. Harth, Cyrano de Bergerac and the Polemics of Modernity, New York, 1970, pp. 7, 38, 52, 212; M. Alcover, La pensée philosophique et scientifique de Cyrano de Bergerac, Geneva, 1970, pp. 16-17.

validity of E in much greater detail, and with more open-mindedness, than has hitherto been afforded it? Should we dismiss so summarily the printed text, albeit an incomplete one? What happens if we are prepared to take Le Bret's protestations at their face value, or at the very least, if we treat his statements with disinterest, examining impartially the text of E in the light of M and P?

One of Jordan's reasons for doubting whether Cyrano was responsible for the stylistic variants of E is that these are far more extensive and radical than those to be found between M and P.<sup>38</sup> It is in any case arguable whether an author's method and approach to the revision of his work remains the same over a long period of time, but I would question the accuracy of Jordan's assertion if it is applied strictly to purely stylistic variants. While the variants of P as against M are mainly stylistic, and apart from two examples already mentioned - the speech of Dyrcona at the end of the earthly paradise episode, and the Lorrainer passage - concern single words or phrases, the variants of E fall into four main categories: i, purely stylistic revisions, ii, recasts of substantial parts of the text involving style and content, iii, unmarked lacunae, and iv, marked lacunae. I shall examine each of these types in turn.

Variants of a roughly synonymous nature occur

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38. Lune, ed. cit., p. 31: 'wie sparsam Cyrano korrigierte, kann man an den Varianten von P und M konstatieren'.

throughout E, now in agreement with P as against M, with M as against P, and now in agreement with neither manuscript. They are most consistently of a minor significance, of words or phrases. There are also stylistic recasts of a refinement and deliberateness more in keeping with the pattern of variants observed in the 1654 edition of the Letters than with those of P compared to M. In general, there is a tendency towards greater precision, and the substitution for detailed information of more generalized statements or more abstract ones. The following example is typical:

P, fo. 41<sup>r</sup>

1657 (E), pp. 46-7

un jour comme j'estois attaché  
au bout d'une corde avec (a)  
laquelle le charlatan me  
faisoit sauter pour divertir  
le badault, un de ceux qui me  
regardoient apres m'avoir  
consideré fort attentivement  
me demanda en grec qui j'estois?

un jour comme j'estois  
attaché au bout d'une corde,  
avec laquelle le Charlatan  
me faisoit sauter pour  
divertir le monde,  
j'entendis la voix d'un  
homme qui me demanda en  
Grec qui j'estois.

(a) M, fo. 29<sup>r</sup>, 'de'.

The essential information concerning the incident and the delineating characteristic peculiar to the onlooker - shortly to be revealed as the daemon of Socrates - his Greek, are retained; the minimum is altered with the maximum effect, stylistically. The revision is adept and knowing.<sup>39</sup> Jordan's opinion would seem to be something of a half-truth: the variants of E combine the type of minor alterations which run through P

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39. E.g.s of other such variants: A.M., p.19, 'certains soldats....le soir'; pp. 21-2, 'A peine, quand je fus... tomber au firmament'; p. 27, vts. m and p.

as compared to M with indeed more substantial recasts, but if one considers the variants of the 1654 Letters as compared to their manuscript counterparts, it is clear that the pattern of these and that of all the stylistic variants of E is very similar. This impression is verified when we consider those revisions in E dealing jointly with content and style.

In this second category, a like dexterity is evident, involving the ability to extract the essence of a passage, rethink it, and recast it in terms of the narrative while omitting unorthodox inference:

P, fos. 77<sup>v</sup>-78<sup>r</sup>

elle (une fille de la reine)  
estoit si transportée de joye  
lors qu' estans en secret je  
luy descouvris les misteres<sup>(a)</sup>  
de nostre religion et princi-  
palement quand je luy parlois  
de nos cloches et de nos reliques

(a) M, fo. 56<sup>v</sup>, 'quelque mistere'.

1657 (E), p.99

elle estoit si transportée  
de joye, lors qu' estant  
en secret, je l'entretenois  
des moeurs et des  
divertissemens des gens de  
nostre monde, et principale-  
ment de nos Cloches, et de  
nos autres instrumens de  
musique.

This revision shows a close affinity to the original in concept, order, and vocabulary, but with the substitution of a lay context for the clerical one the satire is removed; the harmonious continuation of the narrative is assured, as are the proportions of the manuscript sentence, whilst the bite and context is removed without trace.

Again in the following example the narrative sequence is safeguarded: the force of the denial of the value of Christian doctrine by the moon-men's inquisitor is attenuated, without that part of the debate having to be suppressed:

P, fos. 83<sup>r</sup>-83<sup>v</sup>

1657 (E), p.108

mais si tost que je l'entendis soustenir une resverie si contraire a ce que la foy nous apprend je luy demandé ce qu'il pourroit respondre a l'autorité de Moÿse et que ce grand patriarche avoit dit expressement <sup>(a)</sup> que Dieu l'avoit creé en six jours, cet ignorant ne fit que rire au lieu de me respondre: Je ne pus alors m'empescher de luy dire que puis qu'il en venoit la je commençois a croire que leur monde n'estoit qu'une lune.

mais, si tost que je l'entendis soustenir une resverie si contraire à ce que la foy nous apprend, je brisay avec luy, dont il ne fit que rire, ce qui m'obligea de luy dire que puisqu'ils en venoient là, je commençois à croire que leur monde n'estoit qu' une Lune.

(a) M, fo. 61<sup>v</sup>, 'expressement' is lacking.

The moon inquisitor still laughs at Dyrcona's beliefs, but the authority of Moses is no longer called into question. As occurs consistently in E, the biblical names are deleted and the religious satire toned down, without the gist of the original being wholly lost; as with the purely stylistic variants, these revisions tend also to be neater and shorter.

The unmarked deletions, likewise, are skilfully executed; in particular, care has been taken to link up the text after deletion, so that a sequence of thought is maintained, even though an entire concept may have been removed. The following is an example of the reviser's technique at its most punctilious:

P, fo. 110<sup>v</sup>-111<sup>v</sup>

1657 (E), pp. 142-3

A ce mot le fils de l'hoste appella son pere et lors qu' il fust arrivé la compagnie luy demanda l'heure(a). Le bonhomme respondit huit

A ces mots le fils de l'hoste appella son pere pour sçavoir quelle heure il estoit, mais ayant répondu qu'il estoit huit

heures. Son fils alors tout en cholere, hê venés ça coquin luy dit-il, ne vous avois-je pas commandé de nous advertir a sept<sup>(b)</sup>, vous scavés que les maisons s'en vont demain, que les murailles sont desja parties et la paresse vous cadenasse jusques a la bouche. Monsieur replicqua le bon home, on a tantost publié depuis que vous estes a table une deffense expresse de marcher<sup>(c)</sup> avant apres demain, N'importe repartit -il en luy laschant<sup>(d)</sup> une ruade, vous devés obeir aveuglement<sup>(e)</sup>, ne point penetrer dans mes ordres et vous souvenir seulement de ce que<sup>(f)</sup> je vous ay commandé. Viste allés querir vostre Effigie, Lors qu'il l'eust<sup>(g)</sup> apportée le jouvenceau la saisit par le bras et la fouetta durant<sup>(h)</sup> un gros quart d'heure, Or sus vaurien continua -t-il, en punition de vostre desobeissance, je veux que vous serviés aujourd'huy de risée a tout le monde et pour cet effect je vous commande de ne marcher que sur deux pieds le reste de la journée.

Ce pauvre vieillard sortit fort exploré. Et son fils continua, messieurs je vous prie d'excuser<sup>(i)</sup> les friponneries de ce poste<sup>(j)</sup> [sic], j'en esperois faire quelque chose de bon mais il abuse de mon amitié. Pour moy je pense que ce coquin la me fera mourir, en verité il m'a desia mis plus de dix fois sur le point de luy donner ma malediction.

J'avois bien de la peine quoy que je me mordisse les levres a m'empescher de rire de ce monde renversé.

heures sonnées, il luy demanda tout en colere pourquoy il ne les avoit pas advertis à sept comme il le luy avoit commandé, qu'il sçavoit bien que les maisons partoient le lendemain et que les murailles de la Ville l'estoient desja. Mon fils, repliqua le bon homme, on a publié depuis que vous estes à table une defence expresse de partir avant apres-demain: N'importe repartit le jeune homme, vous devez obeir aveuglement, ne point penetrer dans mes ordres, et vous souvenir seulement de ce que je vous ay commandé. Viste allez querir vostre effigie: lors qu'elle fut apportée il la saisit par le bras, et la fouetta un gros quart d'heure: "Or sus, vaut rien continua il, en punition de vostre désobeissance, je veux que vous serviez aujourd'huy de risée à tout le monde, et pour cet effet je vous commande de ne marcher que sur deux pieds le reste de la journée; le pauvre homme sortit fort éploré, et son fils nous fit des excuses de son emportement.

J'avois bien de la peine, quoy que je me mordisse les levres, à m'empescher de rire d'une si plaisante punition.



M, fo. 85<sup>r</sup>-86<sup>r</sup>: (a) l'heure qu'il estoit; (b) sept heures; (c) partir; (d) luy repartit. Il luy laschent; (e) followed by 'et'; (f) que; (g) elle fust; (h) pendant; (i) 'd'excuzer' written twice; (j) porté: presumably for 'cet emporté' (cf. Jordan, p. 191, n. 15).

The mechanics of the revision would seem to be as follows: an uniformity and increased fluidity of rhythm in the initial change from direct to indirect speech; in E, this first part of the conversation now reads as an introduction to the inflexible, yet arbitrary, 'justice' of paternal decision-making (i.e. here, the son's role); by resituating this as the background leading to the actual incident - in direct speech, all emphasis is placed on the stupidity of the young man's parental stance; but, at the same time, by omitting the references to the laziness of the father, to his beating by the son, and to the son's assessment of him as a disobedient and disappointing member of the family, in which the father plays the subservient role, together with the substitution of 'mon fils' for 'Monsieur', and 'le pauvre homme' for 'le vieillard', the reviser attenuates the force of the idea of reversed paternal and filial roles. Thus, while the satire on paternal attitudes remains, the ridicule tends to fall on the young man as such. The reversal is still the backbone of the narrative, so that the retention of 'cette burlesque pédagogie' in E, in a reference back to this incident made in the passage immediately following the quotation above, makes good sense. The substitution for 'ce Monde renversé' of 'une si plaisante punition' knits together this

idea of burlesque with the now attenuated insistence on reversal of normal roles; textually it now makes better sense, for with the removal of the reference to the old man's 'friponneries' and his son's 'malédiction', the idea of punishment follows logically upon the , in E, immediately preceding reference to the son's order that the father walk on two legs all day. Thus, in E, the pervading feel of the episode is its 'plaisant' aspect, whereas in the manuscripts it had been the brutality of paternal behaviour which was the dominant. In the manuscripts this impression of brutality is largely achieved through the staccato effect of the continued direct speech; this effect is more pronounced in M than P. In short, the revision is adept and achieves specific results: the attenuation and camouflaging of the original message, but not its obliteration. The intimate knowledge of the narrative witnessed to in its reworking in E suggests the handiwork of the author rather than of an editor.

This is not an isolated instance of dexterity in revision: in the recasts and unmarked deletions throughout the printed text a similar care to safeguard the coherence and original sequence of the narrative is shown. If we look at a more substantial revision involving deletion, from the latter part of the Lune, at the point where, in the manuscript copies, we have the first mention of the young moon philosopher's scepticism concerning man's claim to personal immortality, we find that an extensive cut is effected so skilfully that no inkling of it remains in E. The cut consists of three folios

of P (135<sup>v</sup>-138<sup>v</sup>), in which the lunarian denies to man this privilege on two counts, viz: that man's claim to be the only creature to possess Reason is false - other animals possess that faculty also; that, even given that man were unique in this respect, then a just God would surely not render this injustice doubly marked by adding the second privilege of immortality to the first. The daemon, in reply, accepts the logic of the lunarian's argument, but counters it by questioning whether God views things in the same way as man; it is at this point that the deletion ends. The daemon continues by enunciating the theory that, since all is in all, all creatures, through assimilation, rise in the scale of being to enjoy a succession of lives culminating in humanity. The deletion entails syntactical changes, so as to knit together the passage immediately preceding it and that following, thus:

P, fos. 135<sup>v</sup>/138<sup>r</sup>

1657 (E), p.176

Pendant tout ce discours nous ne laissions pas de disner, et si tost que nous fusmes levés de dessus nos lits, (a) nous allasmes au jardin prendre l'air, les occurrences et (b) la beauté du lieu .....  
(daemon speaking): je vous descouvriré un mistere qui n'a point encor esté revelé.  
Vous scavés, Ô mon filz, que de la terre (c) il se faict un arbre...

Pendant tout ce discours nous ne laissions pas de disner, et si tost que nous fusmes levez nous allasmes au jardin prendre l'air, et là prenant occasion de parler de la generation et conception des choses, il me dit. Vous devez sçavoir que la terre se faisant un arbre...

M, fo. 104<sup>v</sup>/106<sup>r</sup>: (a) 'de dessus nos lits' not in M;  
(b) 'les occurrences et' not in M; (c) followed by 'quand'.

In the deleted passage there is no discussion of generation and conception; however, in the passage immediately preceding the deletion there is a fairly lengthy explanation of the lunarians' custom of wearing around their waist, not the martial and destructive sword, but phallic adornments, the symbol of life-giving. Thus, the variant of E unites the matter of the narrative preceding and following the omitted portion, rendering the revision undetectable. In order to effect the cut neatly, the reviser has been willing to change the identity of the speaker: in E, the young moon philosopher is speaking throughout; in the manuscripts, the daemon takes over. However, with the removal of the libertine sentiments of the lunarian, there is no incongruity in his acquiring the words of the daemon. Overall coherence in the narrative has taken precedence over individual roles, but since the young moon philosopher has, in any case, lost much of his characteristic bite in the expurgations of E, this priority is an intelligent and defensible one.

Are the marked deletions noticeably different in complexion from the unmarked ones, which, clearly, do bear a close similarity to the recast passages of stylistic nature and of content?

There are seventeen sets of suspension marks in the 1657 edition of the Lune. These represent deletions of diverse length and nature. The first ten occur in the earthly paradise episode; the eighth (three folios of P) and the tenth (eight

folios) being extensive.<sup>40</sup> The eleventh occurs in the middle of the daemon's description of his method of rejuvenation through the inspiration of a youthful moribund's breath. The twelfth consists of a virulent attack on the fifth commandment, and is directed in particular against the authority of the father. By means of the thirteenth a diatribe against the Christian virtue of chastity is completely removed, along with the daemon's defence of the doctrine. (The twelfth omission corresponds to two folios of P, and the thirteenth to two and a half).<sup>41</sup>

The fourteenth set of suspension marks probably do not represent a deletion, but rather an alternative means of

40. They are marked in E as follows (1657 pagination):  
 1. p. 29 (P, fo. 17<sup>v</sup>), 'vous le saurez bien tost.... ainsi vous pouvez bien juger' - 3 ll; 2. p. 35 (P, fo. 22<sup>r</sup>), 'où vous marchez est... or en ce temps la' - 17 ll; 3. p. 36 (P, fo. 22<sup>v</sup>), 'extatiques.... que l'infirmité' - one word deleted; viz. 'Eve'; 4. p. 36 (P, fo. 23<sup>r</sup>), 'il y avoit tres-peu....La simpathie' - 1½ ll; 5. p. 37 (P, fo. 23<sup>r</sup>), text already recast in E, viz. 'certains peuples l'ont connu sous le nom.... et d'autres' - one word deleted, viz. 'Adam'; 6. p. 37 (P, fo. 23<sup>v</sup>), 'peu de siecles apres....ennuyé de la compagnie' - two words deleted, viz. 'qu'Enoc'; 7. p. 38 (P, fo. 24<sup>r</sup>), text already recast in E, viz. 'car comme il eut observé.... il remplit deux grands vases'; 8. p. 39 (P, fos. 24<sup>v</sup> - 27<sup>v</sup>), 'vous appelez les balances.... Il faut maintenant' - 3 fos.; 9. p. 40 (P, fos. 28<sup>v</sup>-29<sup>r</sup>), already recast at beginning in E, viz. 'une machine de fer fort legere, dans laquelle j'entray....et lors que je fus bien ferme' - ½ fo.; 10. p. 42 (P, fos. 31<sup>r</sup>-38<sup>r</sup>), 'à celuy dont je vous viens de voir consterné.... J'en avois à peine gousté' - 8 fos. Corresponding pagination in A.M.: 1. p. 20; 2., 3., 4., 5. p. 23; 6., 7., p. 24; 8. pp. 24-6, 9. p. 26; 10. pp. 28-32.
41. (1657 pagination): 11. p. 62 (P, fo. 52<sup>r</sup>), text already recast in E, viz. 'fort commun en ce pais.... Je m'en suis approché', - no corresponding gap in P or M; 12. p. 121 (P, fos. 92<sup>r</sup>-93<sup>v</sup>), 'de l'autorité qu'ilz avoient extorquée ... Vous ne tenez de vostre Architecte mortel que vostre corps seulement' - 2 fos.; 13. p. 126 (P, fos. 97<sup>r</sup> - 100<sup>r</sup>), 'une appoplexie qui t'etouffera.... Cette responce ne satisfait pas' - 3 fos. Cf. A.M. pagination: 11. p.40, vt. h; 12. pp. 63-4; 13. pp. 65-7.

saying 'etc'. It follows a list of emotions cited as the effects of 'species' impinging on our auditory organ; in E, the sentence ends: 'nous sommes esmeus tantost à la joye, tantost à la colere.....'; P reads: 'nous sommes esmeus tantost a la joye, tantost a la rage, tantost a la pitié, tantost a la resverie, tantost a la douleur'; but M reads: 'nous sommes esmeus tantost a la joye, tantost a la rage, etc<sup>a</sup>'.<sup>42</sup>

This lacuna bears out the possibility that variants which are synonyms should not be afforded too much importance: they may be scribal, or even a result of the copying involved in any revision of the whole novel by the author. Again, it suggests that one should not be too willing to assume that the suspension marks all have the same significance, or the same origin in terms of source or chronology.<sup>43</sup>

The last three marked omissions had formed part of the young moon philosopher's refutation of personal immortality and resurrection in the manuscript copies, and are contained in the development following the unmarked deletion discussed

42. 14. E, p. 157; P, fo. 121<sup>v</sup>, M, fo. 94<sup>r</sup>; A.M., p. 80.

43. This viewpoint is indeed corroborated by a comparison of editions of the Lune subsequent to E with E and with one another: cf. footnote 18 above; cf. also Lacroix's edition (source of which not given), where suspension marks feature which do not correspond to E, or to the 1659, 1661, 1662, or 1665 editions - on pp. 177 and 179 (two sets), and where omission no. 4 (p. 114) is not marked.

above (pp. 73-5)<sup>44</sup> Only the first of these consists in a deletion of material containing an idea not elsewhere expressed; the last two are probably due to stylistic considerations. Of the seventeen marked omissions, six are made to a text which has already been recast (nos. 5, 7, 9, 11, 16, 17). All of the others, except omission no. 14, are explicable in terms of their content, as are, among the already recast passages omitted, nos. 5, 7, 9; by contrast, I have not been able to deduce any reason other than stylistic for the eleventh set of suspension marks. As with the last two sets, however, since we are dealing with a text different from M and P, it is not possible to ascertain the exact nature of the deleted material.

The majority of the marked expurgations relate to the earthly paradise episode; the longest - nos. 7, 9, 12, 13 - to biblical material or Catholic dogma. The earthly paradise episode constitutes one seventh of P (twenty-one folios out of one hundred and fifty two); in E, it is but half the length of the original. It would seem worthwhile on all these counts to select the ten marked expurgations relating to this episode for examination, in order, with this as well as the above findings in mind, to try to assess the exact nature and origin of E.

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44. (1657 pagination): 15. p. 183 (P, fos. 143<sup>r</sup>-143<sup>v</sup>), 'd' abandonner aussi-tost sa maison...et si cette ame estoit spirituelle' - 1 fo.; 16. p. 184 (P, fo. 144<sup>r</sup>), the text is already recast in E, viz. 'à cause que je n'ay une gauche. ... Et enfin pour faire une comparaison' - no apparent loss; 17. p. 184 (P, fo. 144<sup>r</sup>), text of E: 'Où, mais, adjousta-t-il....Cependant ils veulent que cette ame', no 'adjouta-t-il' in the mss. A.M.  
 pagination: 15., 16., p. 93; 17. p. 94.

There remains in E an initial reference to an apple tree and, at the close of the episode, an oblique reference to the fruit (of the tree of science), which Dyrcona had eaten. There also remains a single reference to paradise, now, however, in a context which could well be pagan: ('et voila que je me trouve en Paradis aux pieds d'un Dieu qui ne veut pas estre adoré'). This, together with an anagram - Mada - for Adam, was sufficient for Lacroix to deduce that the episode had to do with earthly paradise.<sup>45</sup> Otherwise, all biblical references, to place names, characters, and incidents, are removed. This revision is carried out both by recasting and deletion, unmarked as well as marked.

The recasts are deftly and consistently effected; where possible a non-committal substitution is made which will make sense in the sequence of the narrative, as for example:

P	E
les Hebreux (fo. 23 <sup>r</sup> )	certaines peuples (p.37)
les Idolatres (")	d'autres (")
dont Dieu L'avoit remply (")	dont il estoit remply (")
le premier homme (fo.23 <sup>v</sup> )	cet homme (")
ce saint homme (fo. 24 <sup>r</sup> )	ce grand homme (p.38)
le Paradis terrestre ou son grand pere (")	le lieu où son ayeul (")
pour les vases ilz monterent tousjours jusques a ce que dieu les enchâssa dans le ciel (fo.24 <sup>v</sup> )	pour les deux vases ils monterent jusques à un certain espace où ils sont demeurez (pp. 38-9)

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45. E, pp. 29, 42-3, 35, 39 (A.M., pp. 20, 32, 23, 26, vt. e). See Lacroix, *ed. cit.*, p. 112, n. 1; p. 114, n. 1; p. 116, n. 1.



The following examples, likewise, illustrate the deliberateness, consistency, and neatness of the recasts; also, the similarity in technique to those of the edition as a whole, and to the revisions of the 1654 Letters:

P	E
vous n'avés pas oublié je pense que je me nomme helie. (fo.27 <sup>v</sup> )	Je croy que vous n'aurez pas oublié mon nom (p.39)
vous scaurés donc que J'estois en votre monde et que j'abitois avec Elisée un hebreu comme moy sur les bords du Jourdain (")	vous scaurez donc que j'habitois sur les agreables bords d'un des plus renommez fleuves de vostre monde (")
apres avoir sacrifié pour l'expiation des foiblesses de mon estre mortel je m'endormis et l'ange du Seigneur m'apparut en songe; aussi tost que je fus eveillé je ne manqué pas de travailler aux choses qu'il m'avoit prescrites; je pris de l'aiman ... (fo. 28 <sup>r</sup> )	apres avoir longtemps resvé, je pris de l'aymant... (").

The unmarked deletions are of a piece with these revisions, for instance: 'mais ce saint personnage' (P, fo. 23<sup>v</sup>) becomes 'ce personnage' (E, p.37); 'droit à Dieu' and 'que par miracle' (P, fo.24<sup>r</sup>) are deleted without trace. Do the marked lacunae repeat this pattern?

The type of material deleted is identical, but, whereas all the revisions entertained so far make good sense in E, the majority of the marked omissions exhibit one of two characteristics which hinder comprehension: either the passage becomes obscure owing to the loss of necessary relevant information causing a loss of continuity (cf. nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6), or a complete step in the narrative is omitted, so that there seems to be little point in the episode having been retained at all (cf. nos. 8, 10). Yet there is very good reason for

these failings, which are consistent with the assumed intentions dictating all the revisions of biblical content. What all the marked deletions just listed have in common is information which it is difficult, if not impossible, to paraphrase or recast within the syntactical terms of the original, or without removing the substance of the passage altogether. While it had been feasible to obscure or paraphrase the characters' names in the examples I have cited, in the first six marked expurgations one can envisage no way in which the reviser could have achieved that goal. It, therefore, seems reasonable to suppose that these gaps exist faute de mieux; their very existence supports the theory that they were the result of the same operation as the recasts and unmarked lacunae already quoted.

Likewise, the extensive three-folios-long eighth marked expurgation, and the eight-folios-long tenth expurgation consist in the burlesquing of stories from Genesis - Noah and the flood; Adam, Eve, the forbidden fruit, the tree of knowledge, and the serpent. The gaps, acknowledged, merely reinforce the impression that the reviser (expurgator) was intent on retaining the earthly paradise episode.

Notwithstanding the argument for one revisory operation, three of the marked deletions in the earthly paradise episode in E are made on already recast material. (nos. 5, 7, 9). Of these, the first would still fit the surmise made above: P reads, (fo.23<sup>r</sup>): 'les hebreux l'ont connu sous le nom d'adam et les Idolatres sous le nom de Promethée'; E has (p.37):

'certains peuples l'ont connu sous le nom..... et d'autres sous celui de Prométhée'; however, it would seem more likely that, were the revision tackled in one go, the option of names (Adam - Prometheus) would have been sacrificed, say thus: certains peuples l'ont connu sous le nom de Prométhée. The other two instances must have involved two separate revisions, but not necessarily by different persons. The first of these, on the contrary, is much more likely to have been the work of the same person at different points in time, or of two individuals both of the same mind, for in both pieces of revision, the purpose appears to be identical - to tone down, then to remove completely, reference to biblical figures. The passage reads as follows in P and E:

P, fo. 23<sup>V</sup>-24<sup>R</sup>

mais ce saint personnage ne jugea point de retraicte asseurée contre l'ambition de ses parens qui s'esgorg-eoient desja pour le partage de vostre monde, sinon la terre bienheureuse dont jadis Adam son ayeul luy avoit tant parlé, touttefois comment y aller? L'Eschelle de Jacob n'estoit pas encore inventée. La grace du tres haut y supplea car elle fit qu'Enoc s'avisa que le feu du ciel descendoit sur les holocaustes des justes et de ceux qui estoient agreables devant la face du Seigneur, selon la parole de sa bouche; L'odeur des sacrifices du Juste est monté jusques a moy. Un jour que cette flâme divine estoit acharnée a consommer une victime qu'il offroit a

1657 (E), pp.37-8

Ce personnage toutefois ne jugea point de retraite asseurée contre l'ambition de ses parens qui s'égorg-eoient desja pour le partage de vostre monde, sinon la terre bienheureuse, dont son ayeul luy avoit tant parlé et dont personne n'avoit encore observé le chemin: mais son imagination y supplea, car comme il eut observé.....il remplit deux grands vases qu'il luta hermetiquement et se les attacha sous les esselles; la fumée aussi tost qui tendoit à s'eslever et qui ne pouvoit penetrer le metal.....

l'Eternel, de la vapeur qui  
s'exaloit il remplit deux  
grands vases qu'il luta hermet-  
iquement et se les attacha sous  
les esseles. La fumée aussy tost  
qui tendoit a s'eslever droit  
a Dieu et qui ne pouvoit que par  
miracle penetrer du metal....

The revisions presupposed when the lacuna was made follow the same method as that already observed in the examples so far quoted of unmarked lacunae and recastings and there is no reason to assume that they are not of the same date and origin; this type of revision obtains throughout E. One is reminded of the recasting of biblical allusion in the letters, where reference to such material is not altogether deleted, but is toned down.<sup>46</sup> In the second revision of the Lune, by contrast, the biblical figures are removed entirely. The final instance in this episode of two-stage revision is clear-cut in that the first revision - unmarked - is of a wholly stylistic nature, and the second, a deletion, marked as such, consisted in biblical allusion. It reads cogently in E, despite the loss of information.<sup>47</sup>

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46. Cf. above, pp. 51-3.

47. The versions are as follows:

P, fos. 28<sup>v</sup>-29<sup>r</sup>

1657(E), p.40

Ensuite de ces preparacions  
Je fis construire un chariot  
de fer fort leger et de la  
quelques mois, tous mes engins  
estant achevés, j'entré dans  
mon industrieuse charrette.  
there follows the expurga-  
tion re Elijah's dream, in  
which the Angel informed  
Dyrcona that he would discover  
the tree of science in Adam's  
paradise on the moon, ending:  
'Enfin je monté dedans' and  
continuing: et lors que je  
fus bien ferme

En suite de ces preparacions  
je fis construire une  
machine de fer fort legere,  
dans laquelle j'entray....  
et lors que je fus bien  
ferme

It is clear, therefore, that some, if not all the expurgations marked in E were made subsequent to a carefully executed revision of an earlier version of the Lune, akin to P. While a case may be argued for a singleness of purpose in both stages of revision, and while the unintelligibility for the reader of many of the expurgations may be more an accident of fortune than the result of the expurgator's carelessness, however, some of the later expurgations cannot be accounted for on these grounds. As in the unmarked deletion discussed above, concerning the likelihood of personal immortality,<sup>48</sup> so, in the thirteenth marked lacuna, the change of speaker, which has occurred in the expurgated part of the narrative, is not taken into account. Whereas one could find adequate reasons for condoning this in the earlier example, here the sequence of the narrative can clearly be seen to have been lost in E. Two paragraphs prior to the expurgation, the young moon philosopher had taken over the conversation: 'A ces mots, il (le démon) se teut et le filz de nostre hoste prit ainsy la parole'. Immediately after the suspension marks indicating the deletion, we read: 'Cette response ne satisfit pas, à ce que je crois, le petit hoste'; no attempt has been made to link up the passage coherently.<sup>49</sup>

The presentation of the last episode in the novel - the young moon philosopher's diatribe against personal immortality

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48. Cf. above, pp. 73-5 (P, fos. 135<sup>v</sup>-138<sup>r</sup>; A.M., pp. 89-90).

49. P, fos, 97<sup>r</sup>-101<sup>r</sup> (A.M., pp. 65-7).

and the resurrection on materialist grounds (posterior to the already deleted introduction to the subject which, in P, ends five folios earlier, viz. fo. 138<sup>r</sup>) is obscure in the extreme. The development following it, on the impossibility of the resurrection of the body - the argument of the moslem-Christian soul shared through the cannibalism of the Christian - and immediately preceding the dénouement, has also already been removed; the recast dénouement of E following on the now heavily expurgated main argument. Thus, with the earlier initial point of the injustice of the Christian doctrine, which singles out man as rational and immortal, having been removed, the emphasis is now placed wholly on the new starting point in the discussion, the proposition that,

Pour l'ame des bestes qui est corporelle, je ne m'estonne pas qu'elle meure, veu qu'elle n'est possible qu'une harmonie des quatre qualitez, une force de sang, une proportion d'organes bien concertéz; mais je m'estonne bien fort que la nostre intellectuelle, incorporelle et immortelle, soit contrainte de sortir de chez nous, par la mesme cause qui fait perir celle d'un boeuf.

Given the loss of the earlier development, the irony of this variant of it is also lost: here, Cyrano uses the components of the earlier argument, i.e. man versus brute, intellect (reason) versus <sup>the</sup> non-rational, immortality versus no after life, turns the former case on its head, and, by means of irony, draws the same conclusion - that man is no different from other species. Most of the elaboration of this theme as initially stated is deleted in the fifteenth set of suspension marks; the speech then continues, 'et si cette ame estoit spirituelle et par soy-mesme raisonnable qu'elle fut aussi capable

d'intelligence quand elle est séparée de notre masse, que quand 'elle en est revestue, pourquoy les Aveugles-néz ... ne scauroient-ilz....voir? (my suspension marks)'. For the reader unacquainted with the <sup>manuscript copies,</sup> ~~mes~~ this development is exceedingly hard to follow, the second part of it appearing to be in direct contrast to the first.<sup>50</sup>

The last two sets of suspension marks do not cohere exactly with P or M, and, together with the recast sentence which separates them, suggest that the text had already been revised;<sup>51</sup> curiously, despite the off-putting effect of these

50. P, fos, 142<sup>v</sup>-143<sup>v</sup> (E, pp. 183-4; A.M., p.93).

51. The variants read:

P, fo. 144<sup>r</sup>

Quoy je ne pourré donc me servir de ma main droite par ce que j'en ay aussi une gauche. ilz alleguent pour prouver qu'elle ne scauroit agir sans les sens encor qu'elle soit spirituelle l'exemple d'un peintre qui ne scauroit faire un tableau s'il n'a des pinceaux, ouy mais ce n'est pas a dire que le peintre qui ne peut travailler sans pinceaux, quand avec ses pinceaux il aura perdu ses couleurs, ses crayons, ses toilles, et ses cocquilles qu'alors il le pourra mieux faire, bien au contraire, plus d'obstacles s'opposeront a son labeur plus il Luy sera impossible de peindre. Cependant ils veulent que cette ame

1657(E), p.184

Quoy je ne pouray donc me servir de ma main droite, à cause que je n'ay une gauche? ... Et enfin pour faire une comparaison juste et qui destruisse tout ce que vous avez dit, je me contenteray de vous apporter l'exemple d'un Peintre qui ne peut travailler sans pinceau, et je vous diray que l'ame est tout de mesme quand elle n'a pas l'usage des sens. Ouy, mais, adjousta-t-il.... Cependant ils veulent que cette ame

marks, the text of E is more straightforward in its main argument than is either P or M. Nothing of the main tenet - that man's soul dies with his body, is sacrificed. The balance of the story has been upset, however: apart from the earthly paradise episode, the highest proportion of deleted material, marked and unmarked, occurs in the discussion with the young moon philosopher, prior to the dénouement, i.e. folios 135<sup>V</sup> to 148<sup>V</sup> of P, where half of the original narrative is absent from E. This is the most openly unorthodox part of Cyrano's work; even more surprising, perhaps, is that any of it remains in printed form, though, of course, at no point is the argument couched in biblical terms.

In many respects, then, the marked deletions of E cohere with the other revisions of E as against P and M; however, it is certain that some, if not all, of them postdate the main revision of E, and that this text is the result of at least two stages of reworking.

Throughout, a systematic attempt has been made to eradicate the acerbity of tone and outrageousness of content in all instances of satire directed against Christian doctrine and mores, just as, in the earthly paradise episode, the burlesquing of biblical characters and events is expurgated. In M and P, Dyrcona is put on trial by the lunar clergy; in E, they become academics: 'des doctes' and 'sçavans' who form 'les gens du Conseil'. Already in earthly paradise, the change from 'prestres' to 'sçavans' has been used. Their punishment of 'athées' becomes one for 'impies', just as, later, the young moon philosopher, described in the ~~mes~~ <sup>manuscript copies</sup> as a gifted young man



who affects 'l'impiété par ostentation', affects in E 'le libertinage' and does so in order to 's'acquérir la reputation d'homme d'esprit'.<sup>52</sup> Likewise, 'le grand Pontife que vous voyez la mitre sur la teste' who has evolved, by successive stages up the scale of being, from a clump of grass, in E becomes merely 'cet homme que vous voyez'.<sup>53</sup> In the intellectual cabbage story, God is paganized and secularized into 'la Nature' (though this revision is not made throughout the passage), and 'le Souverain Estre' into 'le premier Estre'.<sup>54</sup> No trace of these cuts and recasts is noticeable to a reader unacquainted with the earlier manuscript versions; only in six of the marked lacunae would such a reader find difficulty in following the narrative (i.e. in nos. 1, 3, 6, 7, 13, 17).

It is not accurate, however, to suggest that all the religious connotations are removed, nor even that nothing of the contesting of central Christian beliefs remains in E. As well as the anagram 'Mada', the reference to his warring sons is present in E.<sup>55</sup> In the moon trial, Dyrcona, judged

52. A.M., p. 52, vt. p; p. 54, vts. a, b, c, d; p. 57, vt. e; p. 58, vts. e, f, g; p. 60, vts. a, f, g, h. (in E, on pp. 93-100 and 107-15). Cf. A.M., p. 26, vt. d (E, p. 39). A.M., p. 61, vt. a (E, p. 116), cf. revised ending of E (A.M., pp. 96-7; E, p. 185), where the idea that the young moon philosopher is 'un blasphémateur' is deleted.

53. A.M., p. 91, vt. a (E, p. 177).

54. A.M., p. 67, vts. e, f, g; p. 68, vts. a, f. (E, pp. 128-9).

55. I.e. Cain and Abel: 'Ce personnage [Enoch] toutefois ne jugea point de retraite assurée contre l'ambition de ses parens qui s'égorgeoient desja pour le partage de vostre monde' (A.M., p.24; E, p.37).

to be a man, is punished by 'une amende honteuse car il n'en est point en ce pays-la d'honorable' - a transparent allusion to the terminology of the trials of the Inquisition. This is followed by a public recantation in which the very experience of the hero is called into question, but in which the actual form of the statement is a nonsensical paradox: 'Peuple, je vous déclare que cette Lune-ci n'est pas une Lune, mais un Monde; et que ce Monde là-bas n'est pas un Monde, mais une Lune. Tel est ce que le Conseil trouve bon que vous croyiez'. This patent untruth emphasizes in more trenchant fashion than had done the trial of Galileo itself the fatuity of requiring a man to proclaim that which he knows to be false. Earlier, Gonzales's account of his ill-faring at the hands of the Inquisition is retained in E also.<sup>56</sup>

Even if God becomes 'la Nature' in parts of the intellectual cabbage episode, an idea central to the argument and contrary to orthodox teaching is kept, with no attempt at attenuation: that man, through original sin, has lost so much of his first nature as now to be no more in the likeness of God than the cabbage.<sup>57</sup> Again, it is not true, as Erica Harth

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56. 'On m'a voulu mettre en mon pays à l'Inquisition, pour ce qu'à la barbe des Pedans j'avois soustenu qu'il y avoit du vuide, et que je ne connoissois point de matiere au monde plus pesante l'une que l'autre' (A.M., p.60, cf. p. 45; E, pp. 114, cf. 76).

57. 'Si on dit que nous sommes faits à l'image du premier estre... par son trognon, et par sa teste' (A.M., p.68; E, pp. 129-30).

states, that 'all the sections on miracles were scrupulously deleted' from E; when the young moon philosopher ridicules the idea that supernatural intervention may cure the sick, the initial mention of the word 'miracle' is kept, and, in the body of the passage, the import of the initial proposition remains clear. The reviser merely attenuates the force, and specifically Christian nomenclature, of the original, now omitting the word 'miracle', now substituting for it 'le surnaturel'. The main idea, that all phenomena can be explained naturally, remains just as clear in the expurgated text.<sup>58</sup>

If we compare E with M and P as a whole, we discover that none of the essential ideas of the Lune is completely eradicated; the revisions are cosmetic rather than fundamental. Thus, for example, while the argument against chastity is deleted, the idea that not to engender is worse than murder, the potential offspring having enjoyed no life as compared with the murdered victim's foreshortened one, is retained in E.<sup>59</sup>

58. E. Harth, op. cit., p.38; A.M., pp. 91-3 (E, pp. 178-82). Both in the mss and in E, Tyrcona starts off the discussion with, 'C'est un aussi grand miracle...', and in both it ends with the notion of miracle intact; in the last variant in this passage, E is more explicit than the mss, viz: P, fo. 142<sup>r</sup> 1657(E), p.182

car je veux qu'il soit  
rechappé beaucoup de ces  
messieurs qui s'estoient  
voués; combien davantage  
en voyons nous qui sont  
peris miserablement avec  
leurs voeux.

car je veux qu'il soit  
reschappé, pourquoy crier  
miracle, puis que nous  
voyons beaucoup de personnes  
qui s'estoient vouées perir  
miserablement avec leurs  
voeux?

59. A.M., p. 65 (E, pp. 125-6): 'La Philosophie de leur monde... qui t'etouffera'; the deleted passage criticising the doctrine of chastity follows immediately on this.

While the main argument against the possibility of resurrection, couched in recognizably Christian terms, is already eradicated prior to the marked expurgations, the essential notion that runs right through the Lune, of man's similarity with and non-superiority over other creatures, sensitive and vegetative, obtains throughout; the specific case against personal immortality persists, albeit in an obscured form. That monistic materialism which characterizes the Autre Monde, and which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters, along with all its moral implications, is explicitly maintained in the expurgated version. Again, though the eternity of the universe is envisaged alongside the idea of a God in E, it is still but one further, logical, step to the stated proposition of the manuscripts, that once one posits an eternal, non-created matter there is no further need of a divine efficient cause (Cyrano says 'God').<sup>60</sup> What is consistently removed in E is all specific reference to biblical characters or events made in a jocular or disparaging way.

Lastly, despite the failure of the E ending to tally

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60. A.M., pp. 75-6; P, fos. 114<sup>v</sup>-115<sup>r</sup> reads: 'helas Entre rien et un atome seulement il y a des disproportions tellement infinies que la cervelle la plus aigue n'y scauroit penetrer, il faudra donc pour eschapper au Labirinte inexplicable que vous admettiez une matiere eternelle avec Dieu et alors il ne sera plus besoin d'admettre un dieu puisque le monde aura pu estre sans luy'. E, p. 147, reproduces this text save for the last, crucial phrase, which I have italicized.

with the beginning of the Soleil, in contrast to M and P,<sup>61</sup> it is in keeping with the earlier characterization of the daemon, in my opinion, and in this I would disagree with Jordan. He thinks that the daemon's behaviour in E is uncharacteristic for the following reasons:

Can Cyrano have written this ending? His hero, who succeeded in getting to the moon on his own, hesitates to trust himself to an air voyage with the daemon... The daemon is a match for earthly magicians and disregards all natural laws. In the mss, to be sure, the devil works just as fast, but we expect this from the devil. The daemon, on the other hand, until this point, apparently at least, brings everything about by natural means, and this is on the whole the stamp of the whole book; the ending here [in the 1657 version] completely alters the character and import of the work, which becomes fairy-tale.<sup>62</sup>

This interpretation seems based on a misleading account of the daemon's exploits and of Dyrcona's reactions. There is a difference in kind between the hero's machine-aided flight and the daemon's proposed machine-less descent; that difference underlines the distinction made throughout between the feats of the one as contrasted with the other: Jordan's 'apparently at least' is the clue here, for all the daemon's actions appear miraculous to Dyrcona, because daemons are superior to men; the whole point about the daemon is that, with his superior sense perceptions, he performs apparently supernatural acts naturally, by material means (the inference

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61. Cf. below, pp.94-5, and M. Alcover, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

62. Jordan, ed. cit., p. 31: 'Kann Cyrano diesen Schluss geschrieben haben? ... werden märchenhaft' [My translation].

being that all such phenomena could be explained away naturally in real life). The full force of this idea, therefore, is retained in the changed ending, and, indeed, one could argue that the substitution of the daemon for the devil lends more coherence to the narrative, not less. The text would seem to bear this interpretation out, rather than Jordan's: to Dyrcona's doubts as to the daemon's ability to effect the journey to earth for him, the daemon replies,

et c'est une chose estrange... que ce que vous croyez et ne croyez pas; he pourquoy les Sorciers de vostre monde qui marchent en l'air et conduisent des armées de gresles, de neiges, de pluyes et d'autres tels meteores, d'une Province en une autre, auroient-ils plus de pouvoir que nous? Soyez, soyez je vous prie plus credule en ma faveur.

Dyrcona understands the daemon's premises, for he concedes:

Il est vray... que j'ay receu de vous tant de bons offices, de mesme que Socrate et les autres pour qui vous avez tant eu d'amitié, que je me dois fier à vous.

Just as he can become invisible, can change his appearance, can revitalize himself through inhaling a young moribund's breath, and do all these naturally, and just as he had been the mentor of the most famous human beings accused of sorcery, so he is capable of machine-less flight.<sup>63</sup> All these capacities are superhuman, but not supernatural, for all are accomplished because of the daemon's superior organism.

This ending is no more nor less 'fairy-tale' than

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63. A.M., variant at foot of pp. 97-8 (E, p. 187); cf. earlier, A.M., pp. 39, 36, 34-5.

that of the manuscripts. In keeping with the rest of the recasts in E, it retains the order and sequence of the manuscript narrative, and also some of the verbal substance. The minimum alteration has been effected to attenuate the implied admiration of Dyrcona of a young moon philosopher ~~now~~ described as 'blasphémateur' ~~in E~~, and seized by the devil in M and P. The idea that he might be the Antechrist is also removed; all emphasis is placed in E on the substitute for the high heretic whom Dyrcona esteems and for whom he feels pity and friendship, and for the devil who carries him off: the daemon neatly replaced a two-stage development in P and M. Yet, still in E, Dyrcona is caused to admire the lunarians' qualities of mind as a result of the 'impertinens raisonnemens' (substituted for the 'opinions diaboliques et ridicules' of the manuscripts) of the young lunar blasphemer.<sup>64</sup> Only in the discrepancy between Lune and Soleil in the E text - Dyrcona is left on a boat heading for France in M and P, but in E arrives in Marseille, while at the beginning of the Soleil he arrives at Toulon - is there any evidence to suggest that the revision is not the work of Cyrano himself. Even here, if we are able to accept the principle of the most difficult reading, one could argue that Cyrano could have overlooked, or forgotten, the exact location in his sequel, given that the last few sentences of E are accurate, and therefore, that his manuscript of the Soleil had, indeed, been stolen. This discrepancy, nonetheless, is one of the strongest arguments, even more so than the in-

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64. A.M., pp. 96-7; P, fos. 148<sup>v</sup>-149<sup>v</sup> (E, p. 185).

competence of some of the marked lacunae, for not imputing the revisions as well as the marked expurgations to Cyrano. However, this very last part of E is by no means necessarily the handiwork of the same person as the rest of the revised script.

For, it must be admitted that the reviser of E (first stage), was well acquainted with the type of theories expounded in the Autre Monde. In at least two instances, the recast text throws more light on the import of the content than in the manuscripts. Firstly, as I shall argue in chapter IV,<sup>65</sup> the replacement of 'Dieu' by 'la Nature' in the intellectual cabbage episode reveals Cyrano's inferences more clearly. Secondly, the Gonzales of P and M recognizes that his theory of the unity of matter requires an activating, life-giving, force: 'mais il nous manque un Prométhée pour faire cet extraict'. The Prometheus of E is allotted a specific task, and one which preoccupied an Epicurean thinker such as Gassendi: 'il nous manque un Prométhée qui nous tire du sein de la Nature, et nous rende sensible, ce que je veux bien appeler matière première'.<sup>66</sup> While Lebret's preface leaves the impression that he was familiar with contemporary philosophy, his protestation of incapability of simulating Cyrano's style convinces; for the reviser responsible for the recasts and unmarked lacunae of E writes in the same manner

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65. See below, pp. 220-1.

66. A.M., p. 67, vts. e, f, g; p. 68, vt. a; p. 52, vt. f.



as the recaster of the letters, and with an intimate knowledge of the text. By contrast, the clumsy nature of many of the marked lacunae do not tally with the other revisions of E or with those of the letters or even of Le Pédant joué. Will any one explanation cater for them all?

According to Lebret, Cyrano fell ill some fourteen months prior to his death, attested as occurring on the 28 July, 1655.<sup>67</sup> It is conceivable that Cyrano revised a text approximating to the consideration of an M and P archetype, some time between 1650 and, say, 1653 (at the latest, towards the end of that year), when the Agrippine and the Oeuvres diverses were granted a privilège. However, as we know, the Lune was not published along with these works, possibly either because he did not manage to revise the Soleil in time to have both novels printed together, or, more likely, perhaps, because a privilège was not accorded a text which still contained much material which openly criticized Christian tenets and Catholic practice, and this, despite considerable pruning of such satire and the attenuation of its bite. Given that his illness was a progressively worsening one, as contemporary gossip suggests, is it not plausible that the text inherited by Lebret was a partly re-revised one, unfinished owing to the death of the author?

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67. Cf. preface to E, pp. 28-31, and, in particular, pp. 30-1: 'cet amy sans pair [Mr. de Boisclairs] l'interrompt [sa mort], par un intervalle de quatorze mois qu'il le garda chez luy', i.e., presumably immediately after Cyrano left the house of the Duc d'Arpajon.

While this explanation is pure surmise, it may be supported by the permis d'imprimer contained in the 1662 Nouvelles Oeuvres, which runs as follows:

Nostre amé Charles de Sercy, Marchand Libraire en nostre bonne Ville de Paris, Nous a fait remonstrer qu'il y a cy-devant fait imprimer, en vertu de deux Privileges qu'il Nous a plu accorder: Sçavoir, l'un le 30. Decembre 1653 au feu Sieur de Cyrano Bergerac, Autheur des dits Ouvrages, et l'autre au Suppliant le 23. Decembre 1656. lesdites Oeuvres, contenans une Piece de Theatre, intitulée la Mort d'Agrippine, & plusieurs Lettres; le Pedant Joté, Comedie en Prose; un Fragment d'Histoire Comique, contenant les Estats et Empires de la Lune, qui ont esté favorablement bien receus du public; lesquelles neantmoins le Suppliant a fait revoir & corriger, & depuis la mort de l'Autheur, a pour augmenter icelles Pieces, recouvré du mesme Autheur, avec grand soin & despense, plusieurs Lettres et Vers, avec quelques Fragmens de Physique & d'Histoire Comique. 68

Since there is no trace of a printed edition of the Lune before 1657, the formerly held belief that there existed one in 1650, and possibly another in 1656 has been convincingly discounted, the writer's reference to the favourable reception of the Lune (separated from mention of the works published in 1654 by a semi-colon) would seem to refer to E. ; and De Sercy's revisions and corrections to the 1661 edition of the Lune (though this was printed and published under a separate cover from the Nouvelles Oeuvres). Indeed, a comparison of the list of errata which features at the end of E with the text of the 1661 edition shows that all but two are faithfully corrected

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68. Quoted by Jordan, ed. cit., pp. 40-1.

in the later edition, even to copying one which appears to be inaccurate, and misinterpreting another in an equally ungrammatical manner.<sup>69</sup> Given that Jordan's collation follows the 1659 edition faithfully, then, here too the majority of the errata indicated in the first edition are corrected, but less systematically so than in the 1661 text.

In conclusion, whether or not one believes that some, or possibly (if we choose to disbelieve Lebreton) all, of the marked lacunae were perpetrated by someone other than Cyrano - say Lebreton, or De Sercy, or even the compositor, all the evidence points to the essential text which must have formed the basis of the E print manuscript as being the work of Cyrano; as such, it should surely be accorded as much weight in our consideration of his thought as M or P. Given his illness, combined with the acceptance of my surmise that the marked expurgations date from around the beginning of 1654 to some time before the author's death, then this feature of E is of less importance to us. Applying Occam's razor, the main text of E would derive from the period 1651 to 1653; the revision of the M and P archetype manuscripts being undertaken at the same time as that of the Letters and of Le Pédant joué. The similarity of technique along with the tendency, already

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69. M. Alcover, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-16, gives the most up to date and comprehensive list of arguments against the existence of an edition of the Lune prior to 1657. Re the errata of E and the 1661 text: E, p. 132, l. 19, 'lesquels lire lesquelles' is copied, though the wrong gender (cf. M and P also); p. 45, l. 8, 'lire elles' (text reads 'ils s'en devoient servir comme eux'), is interpreted as 'elle s'en devoient servir comme eux'. Conversely, p. 112, l. 12, 'dont lire donc' is ignored and the error stands; p. 74, l. 18, 'nous lire leur' is corrected otherwise, by 's'en'.

observed in P, to retain the gist of each episode, including the diatribe against belief in personal immortality, and the awareness of the progression of the narrative and its main thread, lastly, the stylistic competence of the revision, all suggest that Cyrano was responsible for E quite as much as for the letters in their 1654 form. Accepting that we have access to M and P, the expurgated first edition, far from presenting itself as a 'mutilation' of Cyrano's thought, offers us an enriched understanding of his vision of the universe. Can we, indeed, be as sure of the veracity of the text of the Soleil?

iii. The text of L'Histoire comique des Estats et Empires du Soleil

The sequel to the Lune was first published by Charles de Sercy in his Nouvelles Oeuvres of 1662 under the title of L'Histoire comique des Estats et Empires du Soleil. It contains a dédicace from the publisher to Cyrano's brother, Mr. de Cyrano de Mauvières, and an anonymous preface.

The first reference to the Soleil by a contemporary of Cyrano is made by Lebret in his preface to the Lune; it is also mentioned in the final paragraph of E.<sup>70</sup> In contrast

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70. E, preface, p. 22: 'Son Histoire de l'Estincelle et de la Republique du Soleil, où, en mesme stile qu'il a prouvé la Lune habitable, il prouvoit le sentiment des pierres, l'instinct des plantes, et le raisonnement des brutes, estoit encore au dessus de tout cela (de l'Agrippine et du Pédant joué), et j'avois resolu de la joindre à celle-cy; mais un voleur qui pillâ son coffre pendant sa maladie, m'a privé de cette satisfaction, et toy, de ce surcroist de divertissement'; see also, main text, E, p. 191.

to the Lune, which is associated with Cyrano's name and reputation by both his friends and enemies, the Soleil seems to have attracted scant attention. Sorel mentions it in his Bibliothèque française, but discusses the Lune at greater length.<sup>71</sup> Tallemant and the Menagiana ignore it, Dassoucy alludes to the substance of the Lune alone.

It is generally accepted that the Lune was circulated in manuscript form among Cyrano's friends, and thus, the existence of copies, such as M and possibly P too, is to be expected. There is no known manuscript of the Soleil, and whether or not the story of the theft of Cyrano's own copy is true or false - a story recounted in the 1657 dénouement of the Lune, and also by the anonymous prefacer of the 1662 edition of the Soleil - it does suggest that only one copy of the work existed at the time of Cyrano's death. De Sercy infers, in his dédicace, that he had made strong, but ineffectual, efforts to recover the manuscript, which, along with the other works published with it, 'me sont heureusement tombez entre les mains lors qu'une aussi longue qu'inutile perquisition m'en avoit osté l'esperance'.<sup>72</sup>

The novel is presented in an apparently unfinished state; opinion as to whether the rest of the manuscript had been lost or the work left unfinished are divided. The 1662 prefacer suggests the latter reason, describing the text as 'un Fragment', 'un Posthume', 'un Enfant qui n'est pas tout à

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71. 1674 Paris éd., p. 171.

72. Cf. note 70 above.

fait formé', and one of those 'Enfans estropiez' in which literature abounds.<sup>73</sup> Like the reference to the stolen manuscript, this is so close a reminiscence of Lebret, who had described the state in which he had inherited the Lune in much the same terms, as to be a suspect piece of corroborative evidence. Again, it is not possible to know whether the printed text is an accurate rendering or an expurgated one, nor even, on external evidence, whether it is indeed the work of Cyrano. The internal evidence of style and content make it highly unlikely, however, that it is not.

The strongest internal proof that the work is Cyrano's lies in the coherence between the manuscript versions of the Lune dénouement with the beginning of the Soleil. In this context, the fact that the 1657 ending does not tally with the Soleil, which tends to detract from the authenticity of that version of the Lune, or, at least, from its final paragraph, adds to the authenticity of the Soleil. It also, incidentally, supports the contention that the manuscript was not in the possession of Lebret or De Sercy between 1655 and 1657.

There were at least two printings of the Soleil in 1662: Lachèvre notes that his 1662 copy differs in several instances from the B.N. copy; he gives the variants in his 1921 edition.<sup>74</sup> The nature of these is substantial:

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73. Reproduced by Lacroix, ed. cit., p. 196.

74. A.M., pp. 147, n. 1; 157, n. 1; 158, nn. 1, 2; 160, n. 2; 185, n. 1. Variants with other editions are noted on pp. 126, n. 2; 178, n. 2. The variant noted on p. 185, n. 1, appears to be recorded by Lachèvre the wrong way round.

they could not be printers' errors, nor are they characteristic of an expurgator, or of an outside hand. One consists in a rethought-out alternative reminiscent of the technique we have already encountered in the comparison between the manuscript and 1654 versions of the Letters, and between M and P and <sup>the</sup> first edition of the Lune: the main components of the passage remain, while the order and presentation of them involves the ability to rethink the subject; the two versions are as follows:

Lachèvre's copy:

Ce rocher estoit couvert de plusieurs jeunes arbres verds et toufus dont l'ombre charma mes sens fatiguez le plus agréablement du monde, et m'obligea de les abandonner au sommeil pour réparer avec seureté mes forces dans un lieu si tranquille et si frais.

(A.M., p.147) 75

B.N. copy:

Ce rocher estoit couvert de plusieurs jeunes arbres, dont la gaillarde et verte fraischeur exprimoit la jeunesse; mais comme déjà tout amoly par les charmes du lieu, je commençois de m'endormir à l'ombre.

Another variant which occurs during the prosecutor's plea against Dyrcona in the bird kingdom, consists in alternatives which are equally plausible as an authentic Cyranian outlook, as based on the lunar trial:

Lachèvre copy:

premièrement, par un sentiment d'horreur dont nous nous sommes tous sentis saisis à sa veüe sans en pouvoir dire la cause.

(A.M., p. 158)

B.N. Copy:

premièrement, puis qu'il est si effronté de mentir en soutenant qu'il ne l'est pas (un homme).

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75. Cf. A.M., p. 185, n. 1, where the recast involves an understanding of the philosophical principle at issue.

Such widely differing versions, where no obvious reason for censorship is available, speaks strongly in favour of both being present in the manuscript. All these variants lend support to the contention of the preface, that the text is an unfinished one, or at the very least, an only partially revised one. The narrative itself supports this surmise in the following respects. As the novel progresses, so the episodes are less incisively defined: the last third of the work, from the point at which Dyrcona enters Dodona's grove, contrasts sharply in its amorphous delineation with the crispness and terse clarity of the initial Toulousain episode and with the complexion of the Lune. There are sufficient traits in common between this part of the Soleil and work attested as that of Cyrano not to doubt his hand in it. Just as the similarity in style as well as content is striking between the letter 'Contre les Sorciers' and the story of Dyrcona's suffering at the hands of ignorant peasant sorcerer-hunters, so also the 'Arbres amans' and the sun inhabitants' miraculous tree, with its pomegranate fruits, develops a constant theme, already seen in embryo in the Pédant joué; it is a theme which forms an admittedly necessary part of the earthly paradise episode, and which is exploited in a cognate manner in the letter, 'A Mr. de V\*\*\*', where the recipient is compared to one of the Ovidian-type trees of Dodona, half tree, half man, and inhuman from the waist up.<sup>76</sup> The 'Campanella' of the Soleil treats in more

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76. See A.M., pp. 168-76; 138-9; P.J., pp. 69-70: 'Une pomme, en effet..... la mémoire des Pommes' - cf. above, p.45; L., pp. 106-7.



detail an aspect of his real-life prototype by which Cyrano had characterized him in the Lune.<sup>77</sup> The battle of the remora and salamander plays on a trite concept, but one which had been used in one of the love letters, in which Cyrano had likened himself to a 'beste à feu'.<sup>78</sup>

Two sets of suspension marks indicating deleted material exist in the B.N. 1662 text, and three in that of Lachèvre.<sup>79</sup> The third example is particularly of interest in that it provides something of a check to surmise. The inference in the intact narrative is ribald: the bird prosecutor's sixth reason for indicting Dyrcona consists 'en ce qu'il porte la queue devant'; in the B.N. copy, the word 'la queue' is omitted. The other two cuts, likewise, would seem to be on similar grounds. An oak tree in Dodona's grove tells Dyrcona that 'les arbres exercent, soit du corps, soit de l'âme, toutes vos fonctions'; the rest of the paragraph consists in an analogy between human mating and the behaviour of trees in Spring; it contains the following expurgation: 'La Terre, de son costé, s'entr'ouvre et s'échauffe d'une mesme ardeur; et comme si chacun de nos rameaux estoit un ..., elle s'en approche pour s'y joindre'. In both these instances, the

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77. I.e. his ability to know the thoughts of others by simulating their physical stance, A.M., p. 35; pp. 177-8.
78. A.M., p. 177, p.180; L;, pp. 208-9, both versions; cf. also, p. 224: 'un feu composé de glace embrasée qui brûle à force de trembler'.
79. A.M., p. 168; p.179; p. 158, n. 2.

offending word is easily guessed, and one suspects the hand of the publisher or even the compositor. The third example is not so apparent, but from the symptoms of the illness with which the salamander is addicted, the deletion may well be occasioned by a pun referring to a venereal disease; the sentence reads: 'Ces boutons que vous voyez à la gorge de celui-ci qui procèdent de l'inflammation de son foye, ce sont .....'. These expurgations differ from those of the Lune in that they all appear to deal with pornographic material rather than with unorthodox ideas or religious satire. Above all, they save appearances.

Religious satire is not a feature of the Soleil, but there are good reasons for this within the terms of the story. The Lune explored a world which is very much a carbon copy of our own, and it is against this background that satire on human institutions is made possible. The sun is presented as the centre of our world system and of Truth itself, where monistic materialism is an everyday reality. Far from God's being expurgated by an outside hand, He is redundant within the terms of the story; in many respects, the sun has taken the place of the orthodox divinity. What is surprising in the 1662 edition is that this inference is quite clearly made in the description of the sun as 'votre Père, et... l'Autheur de toutes choses'.<sup>80</sup> Again, where there are allusions to Christian doctrine or ritual, these are as bold as passages

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80. A.M., p. 186.

recast or cut out of the 1657 Lune. For instance, the following allusion to Christ's walking on the waves is retained:

Je comptay mes pas si fièrement que, si les  
hommes avoient pû m'appercevoir de leur  
Monde, ils m'auroient pris pour ce grand  
Dieu qui marche sur les nuës.<sup>81</sup>

The derisory description of prayer by the birds seems more sacrilegious than the reference to the paraphernalia of religion - bells and relics - which is recast in a secular mould in the Lune of E: such curious practice constitutes, for the birds, yet one more proof that Dyrcona is a human being.

Il lève en haut tous les matins ses yeux, son nez, et son large bec, colle ses mains ouvertes la pointe au Ciel, plat contre plat, et n'en fait qu'une attachée comme s'il s'ennuyoit d'en avoir deux libres; se casse les jambes par la moitié, en sorte qu'il tombe sur ses gigots; puis avec des paroles magiques qu'il bourdonne, j'ay pris garde que ses jambes rompues se rattachent, et qu'il se relève apres aussi guay qu'aparavent. Or vous sçavez, Messieurs, que de tous les animaux il n'y a que l'Homme seul dont l'âme soit assez noir pour s'adonner à la Magie, et, par conséquent, celuy-cy est Homme.<sup>82</sup>

It seems unlikely that the Soleil is an expurgated text; if it is, then the expurgator is probably of different identity from the reviser of the Lune who made the marked deletions. The simplest, and most plausible account of the text that we possess is that it represents the work of Cyrano, possibly unfinished, or with the ending have been discarded

81. A.M., p. 138.

82. A.M., p. 158; cf. p. 55. See also, above, pp. 69-70.

but not yet recast, in an only partially revised manuscript.

iv. The dating of the Lune and the Soleil.

Madeleine Alcover has surveyed comprehensively the facts available to those who would attempt to date the composition of the Lune. Like her predecessors, she has been forced to admit, on the basis of two sets of conflicting data, that the work could have been composed at any time between 1642 and 1648; she concludes with the compromise solution that the composition lasted several years, probably straddling those limits.<sup>83</sup>

On existing information, it is impossible to assess the period of writing of the first draft of the novel, or the writing methods of Cyrano. The fact that he plays variously on several themes from work to work does not provide us with any certain clues as to how he tackled an individual creation. What, briefly, are the main arguments regularly produced to support each of these end-dates, and can any new light be thrown on this data?

The Lune as we know it, i.e. as in M and P, could not have been composed before 1636, the year in which Mr. de Montmagnie was created viceroy of Quebec, a position which he held until 1647.<sup>84</sup> It could not have been finished later than

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83. Op. cit., pp. 11-14.

84. A.M., p. 10; n. 13; cf. D. G. Creighton, A History of Canada, Boston, 1958, pp. 38, 42.

September 1649, the date of printing of Royer de Prade's La Victime d'Etat et d'Annibal, in which appeared the two dedicatory poems which head P.

Jordan had argued for the earlier date of composition, in the years 1642-3, on the evidence of the reference in M and P to 'Louis le Juste' (Louis XIII), who died on the 14 May 1643, in the present tense.<sup>85</sup> However, conflicting with this is the fact that Cyrano borrows from Godwin's Man in the Moone, a work which, though written at the turn of the century, was not published in English until 1638, and in French until 1648. Could Cyrano have relied on hearsay (for instance, an account of the main ideas by Tristan, who was in England from 1634 to about 1640),<sup>86</sup> did he read English, or did he, as Professor Lawton has suggested, add the borrowings from Godwin some time after the first draft of the Lune had been completed?<sup>87</sup> The consensus is that the fact of the influence of Godwin's story is not sufficient in itself to necessitate dating the composition of the Lune as late as 1648. Lebret's account admits of this influence, but contravenes all the externally established chronology: according to him, Godwin's book 'parut icy il y

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85. A.M., p. 24; cf. Jordan, ed. cit., pp. 39-40.

86. Cf. Introduction to Tristan's Le page disgracié, Paris, 1898 (Bibliothèque elzévirienne), pp. xvi-xvii.

87. H.W. Lawton, 'Bishop Godwin's Man in the Moone' in Review of English Studies, VII (1931), p. 46: 'So quickly and entirely does Domingo vanish, that I am inclined to think that the passages introducing him were added "après coup" by Cyrano to his manuscript'; cf. also his article 'Notes sur Jean Baudoin' in Revue de Littérature comparée, 1926, no. vi, p. 678: 'certes, la plupart de ces coïncidences [between Godwin and Cyrano] peuvent s'expliquer par identité de sources (notably Lucian)'.  
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a douze ou quinze ans' (somewhere between 1641 and 1645).<sup>88</sup>

One piece of information supplied by Jordan and Lachèvre may be inaccurate; in any case, it does not hold determinative power on its own. Of the mention in M and P of Mr. de Montbazon as governor of Paris, Jordan writes: 'Montbazon was chosen as Governor of Paris in 1649'; Lachèvre, that 'M. de Montbazon était gouverneur de Paris en 1649'. Alcover writes without further comment or documentation that he held this office from 1620 to 1649.<sup>89</sup> However, according to the Nouvelle Biographie générale of 1863, already in 1602, Henri IV, in recognition of services rendered faithfully to his father against the Ligue, created a Montbazon governor of the city; according to Moréri, this same member of the family died only in 1654, at the age of 86.<sup>90</sup>

Madeleine Alcover, following Lachèvre, points out that the fact that Louis XIII is alluded to in the present tense does not necessarily imply that the story was written during his reign; it could be set in the past. Indeed, the fact that this passage was not cut out of P, which probably is a copy of a manuscript of around 1648-9, as I shall argue presently, supports such a theory. The argument has wider ramifications.

88. Preface in E.

89. Jordan, ed. cit., p.39; A.M., p. 10, nte. 1; M. Alcover, op. cit., p. 11.

90. See Nouvelle Biographie générale, Paris, 1863, under Rohan, Hercule de; and Moréri, Le grand Dictionnaire, 3rd edt., 1683, vol. II, p. 1049, b.

Which version of the Lune are we trying to date? Should we expect these pieces of information extracted from the story to tell us anything about its writing? For, the Lune is, clearly, at once based on real-life and very much an artistic and imaginative transposition of it. The texts that critics are using as evidence, M and P, are basically similar. P was intended to be read, either in printed form, or, in my opinion, more likely, in manuscript form, to be distributed among Cyrano's friends. Thus, it is unlikely that, in M and P, we are dealing with a first draft, or with a text necessarily at all close to the original draft. However, this is the text upon which the present study is based. In this way, we arrive at much the same conclusion in terms of dates as Jordan and Alcover, but within a different context, and for different reasons. Just as the experiences of Cyrano which serve as the fodder of the Pédant joué predate its composition as we know it by five to eight years, so this may equally well be the case for the Autre Monde. The story is set somewhere in the period 1640 to '43, when Cyrano had returned from military service in Picardy to Paris, given the naming of Montmagnie, Montbazou, and Louis XIII, the admiration expressed for Tristan, La Mothe le Vayer (son or father not stipulated),<sup>and</sup> Gassendi, the reference to the Francion (a work reprinted three times in 1641, once in 1643, three times in 1646, and not at all between then and 1660<sup>91</sup>), and given the scathing criticism of the opponents in

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91. Cf. Emile Roy's edition of Sorel's Histoire comique de Francion, Paris, 1924, vol. I, p. xxix.

the thirty years' war, Philip of Spain and the King of France.<sup>92</sup>

The likelihood is that the P archetype, assuming that it, like P, was prefaced by Royer de Prade's poems, was not written later than 1648-9, and probably not long before this. Mme. Alcover points out that, in the 1650 Oeuvres poétiques of Royer, one of the two poems on the subject of the Lune has been recast; in P, it is the earlier version contained in the Victime d'Etat of 1649, which is copied.<sup>93</sup> Jordan's belief that P was a print manuscript, on account of the dedicatory poems, is not necessarily proven by them: they talk about the Lune rather than praise it; could P not be one of the copies passed round among Cyrano's friends? For, it is only in E that the topical references of the manuscript copies are removed.

E is clearly a later version than P; with the removal of the criticism of the leaders in the war between Spain and France concurs the volte face in political allegiance attested by the letter 'Contre les frondeurs'. If one accepts the cogent surmise of Ann Marsak as to the date of this letter, in her opinion, the content of which relates to the second siege of Paris of 1652,<sup>94</sup> then one might well use this to support my earlier suggestion that the revised text of E was fashioned

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92. A.M., pp. 10, 13, 16; 24; 35; 43; 56. All these references, save those to Tristan, La Mothe, and Gassendi, are removed in E.

93. Op. cit., pp. 16 and 12.

94. Cf. above, p.47 and note 12.



around 1651 to '53. This would also tally with the new station of Cyrano as the patronized inhabitant of the household of the Duc d'Arpajon - a situation which, presumably, required a certain circumspection absent from the manuscripts of the Lune and the Letters.

To date the Soleil is the simpler for being the less sure. No external evidence exists, and the only clue in the work itself is the death of Descartes, who is, at the end of the narrative, just approaching the Philosophers' realm in the sun. Also, there seems to be an oblique reference to the flying machine of Buratini, not known of in France, nor the building of the machine finished, until early in 1648.<sup>95</sup> On the basis of this, the work is generally thought to have been written between 1648 and 1650 inclusive (Descartes having died on 11 February 1650).

Circumstantial evidence exists to support this surmise, in that Cyrano's leaning on the Ovidian Daphne-type metamorphosis in the 'Arbres amans' episode may well reflect the general popularity of the work as a whole in the period 1647-50, and in particular, the influence on him of one of his, then, friends, Dassoucy, who not only wrote the Ovide en belle humeur, but, in the same period, a 'comédie en musique' inspired likewise by this aspect of the Metamorphoses, called Les amours d'Apollon et de Daphné. In his letter 'Contre Soucidas', Cyrano makes no reference to this part of Dassoucy's work, while he does

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95. Cf. Abel Mansuy, Le Monde slave, Paris, 1912, pp. 209, 214-6, 226-8.

allude, unfavourably, to the Jugement de Paris and to the Ovide.<sup>96</sup>

The beginning of the Soleil, so close in thought and expression to the letter 'Contre les Sorciers', may suggest a later date; this letter does not feature in the manuscript copy, and could well be a creation of the period 1651 to '53, but there is no real proof of such a contention. Again, towards the end of the Lune, the daemon offers Dyrcona a book brought from the sun, entitled Les Etats et Empires du Soleil. In the last paragraph of E, the work of Dyrcona-Cyrano is referred to as the Histoire de la République du Soleil. If one accepts, as some critics have, that the daemon's book is a piece of advertisement for Cyrano's sequel, then the complexion of the work changed, suggesting a time lag between the composition of the Lune and the Soleil. However, these hypotheses verge on fancy. What is perhaps more relevant to us than the date of composition of the Soleil is the coherence between it, the Lune, and, in its themes and outlook, the rest of Cyrano's creative work. Before examining the complexion of that universe, I shall consider the two novels in terms of their fictional nature. To what extent are they affiliated to each other, and in how far can we distinguish between the roles that the characters in them are asked to play and the

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96. Re the dating of Les Amours d'Apollon et de Daphné, Yves Giraud traces the circumstances and the development of the creation of Dassoucy's work in his edition of it, Geneva, 1969, pp. 15-21. See also L., pp. 100-1, 17-22; and ll. 26-32, manuscript version.

thought of Cyrano himself?

- v. The universe of the novel: roles and episodes in the Autre Monde.

Is the universe of Cyrano as expressed in the Autre Monde equatable with the attitudes or beliefs of any one, or group, of his fictional characters in it? A study such as Madeleine Alcover's would seem to imply that it is not: in the first part of her book, she deals with each of the characters of the Lune in turn, devoting a chapter to each; in the second part, she divides up a study of the Soleil into its main episodes. Only in a final, third part does she attempt to summarize Cyrano's ideas. This development has the merit of following the emphases of the narrative, for in the Lune it moves more prominently in line with characterization insofar that dialogue is clearly delineated. In the Soleil, the delineation of the thought is rather in terms of lengthy, but distinct, episodes. Yet, despite this method, Mme. Alcover, like most critics before her, does not distinguish between Cyrano the author, and 'Cyrano' the fictional narrator. Thus, in her initial chapter on the Lune, she tends to try to discover consistency in the fictional 'Cyrano's' beliefs, while acknowledging that these change as he gains ever-increasing and varied experience. She concludes the chapter in the same vein: 'ce sont là les opinions personnelles de l'auteur. Il parle en son nom et l'on n'a pas à se demander, comme il faudra le faire quelquefois pour ses interlocuteurs, dans

quelle mesure Cyrano adhère aux thèses qu'ils avancent'.<sup>97</sup>

While Mme. Alcover makes out a good case, I think a better and more accurate one can be advanced for the character 'Cyrano' being distinct from his creator, and it is on this ground as well as that of clarity that I have referred to the created character as 'Dyrcona' throughout (though Cyrano does not use this name until the Soleil, and then only twice: A.M., pp. 106, 119). Dyrcona would seem to approximate closely to an average Collège-educated Frenchman of the mid-seventeenth century. Until proved wrong by the experience of his inter-continental space flight, his philosophical beliefs are wholly orthodox; even after relinquishing Aristotelian astronomy, he yet clings to the physics of the Scholastic as taught him in France. He differs from his similarly orthodox, real-life, counterparts only in that he is obliged to accept the evidence of his eyes, and the forceful cogency, and rightness, of the lunarians' arguments; in other words, the only difference between him and what he represents is accidental, not substantial. Thus, even after the lunarians have convinced Dyrcona of the errors in the information imparted to him by his college regent, still he is biassed by his former teaching, so authoritarian were the methods of its inculcation:

Enfin comme ilz virent que je ne leur clabaudois  
autre chose, sinon qu'ilz n'estoient pas plus  
sçavants qu'Aristote et qu'on m'avoit deffendu de  
disputer contre ceux qui nioient les principes,  
ilz conclurent tous, d'une commune voix, que je  
n'estois pas un homme.<sup>98</sup>

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97. Op. cit., p. 39.

98. A.M., p.54.

In short, he acts as a foil to all the characters he meets, but unlike a later creation such as Candide, he is neither credulous nor stupid. The bite of the satire relies on this depiction of Dyrcona as intelligent; he, as the homme moyen sensuel reflects the reader's own view of himself. In terms of the narrative, Dyrcona is the stable factor, but he is yet caused to change his beliefs, if not his attitudes, in the light of superior argument; his good sense is a vital element, as is the feeling of the reader that he and Dyrcona are in harmony, the reader experiencing vicariously the emotions of the narrator.

Dyrcona is very much a contrived, fictional creation, to whom the author has allotted a clear, functional role. This role is consistent throughout the Autre Monde; it is equally valid in the dream-like setting of the lunar travels, the realistic account of the Toulousain sorcery hunt, and the wondrous haven of the essence of things in the solar regions. The method of proselytizing on Cyrano's part is subtle; his hero does not very often say whether he accepts or disagrees with his interlocutors, rather, we gather from the inter-play between his emotional response, or lack of it, and the tone and force of the utterances of the lunar or solar character, what a rational reaction would be. It is in the variation of such responses that the narrative of the Lune is superior to the bulk of that of the Soleil. Thus, in the first novel, Cyrano's convictions are conveyed through Dyrcona's willingness to learn from the Socratic daemon, his surprise at the

lunarians' social institutions and customs, and his admiration for the young moon philosopher, despite the libertine propensities that he refuses to hide. Like the stock picaresque hero, then, Dyrcona sees, feels, and witnesses, but has experience thrust upon him; he is a passive vehicle for the author's ideas, not the mouthpiece of them. In the Lune, and the Toulousain episode in the Soleil, he is more or less a static observer; with the exception of his trial by the birds, reminiscent of the moon-trial, in his solar adventures, he travels from place to place, happening on events and phenomena which open out before him, whether literally before him, as with the sun-inhabitants' dance, or vicariously, through the solarian characters' descriptions. The narrative technique counterbalances this change in habit of Dyrcona, the Lune comprizing a much faster moving story than the Soleil after the Toulousain story, this last being the most adept account in the Autre Monde.

Whereas Dyrcona instructs the viceroy of Canada on the correctness of the new astronomy, a position he is able to adopt consequent to his unique flight, from the moment that he lands on the moon a series of characters guide and instruct him. Though none of the people Dyrcona meets on either moon or sun are delineated in sufficient detail to live in our imagination as 'real' persons, there are perspectives of depiction; in the foreground are the daemon, the young moon philosopher, and, in the sun, 'Campanella'. These are not Dyrcona's sole guides, however; in the lunar and solar regions he is never left, save momentarily, without a companion teacher. Elijah

gives Dyrcona something of a guided tour through earthly paradise, past and present; the daemon takes over the role on Dyrcona's arrival in the lunarians' territory, but adopts a far more extensive interpretative stance, aided by, though fictionally distinct from, the Spaniard 'Gonzales', one of the queen's daughters, the two lunarian academicians, and the young moon philosopher, who is not so much a mentor as an instructor, equal in his powers of persuasion to the daemon. In the sun, as well as on the sunspot, none of the series of purveyors of information encountered takes on the credibility enjoyed by the daemon and young moon philosopher save 'Campanella'. Again, the conviction which they carry seems to owe nothing to the detail of their personal description nor to the local colour, but rather to the faith which Dyrcona places in them.

Elijah's role is subordinated to an overriding stylistic intent: Dyrcona's flippancy in the face of Elijah's seriousness echoes the burlesque nature of the description of paradise itself. The daemon, who demonstrates his superiority by changing his appearance or becoming invisible as much as by his avowed superior knowledge of the universe, is always a match for Dyrcona's questionings; however much he may doubt, eventually Dyrcona always accedes to the daemon's arguments, thus reinforcing the value of his pronouncements. A certain weight is added to the daemon's thoughts which the young moon philosopher does not always enjoy, since the daemon is on Dyrcona's side during the moon trial, and is also accepted as a pillar of society on the lunarians' terms; the young lunarian, by contrast, portrayed as a hothead, sways on account of his superior

intellect and the logic of his case. This endows his theories, akin to those of the anonymous Quatrains du Déiste, with a cogency, clarity, and acerbity unlikened in the rest of the novel, and only matched by the linear quality of the Toulousain episode in the later novel. It is this trenchant clarity which disappears already in the recast passage in P, and which is lost in E. On the other hand, the success with which arguments can be put either into the mouth of the daemon or of the young moon philosopher demonstrates the relative unimportance of roles as such in the Autre Monde: it is the tone of the narrative that convinces, not the identity of the speaker.

It is because of this that it does not really matter that, for instance, Gonzales should promote two, in themselves, conflicting supportive arguments for the unity of matter; the very fact that he does so shows that it is the main theory that matters, and its anti-aristotelian implications, rather than each of the examples of it which Gonzalès gives on its own, or the plausibility of the role of the Spaniard.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, the novel form does serve a purpose in the depiction of Cyrano's universe: because the décor is fictional and other-worldly, it allows of the expression of ideas which could not openly be promulgated in a philosophical or moral treatise, at least, not without a fideist mode of expression; this is demonstrated

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99. In the first part of his argument, Gonzales says that there is one element which assumes varying roles like a comedian - A.M., pp. 45-9; in the second, that the four elements, earth, fire, air, and water, mix, seemingly, inextricably, with each other - pp. 49-52. Cf. below, ch. II, pp. 161-74.



by the nature of one of the recasts of E, and in keeping with a similar development in the letter 'Contre les Sorciers', much quoted though a rare/<sup>Cyranian</sup>example of such a contemporaneously common philosophical approach.<sup>100</sup> More interestingly, the dialogue form, and depiction of ideas by means of characters, allows of the expression of a profusion of theories and explanations of a given general notion, each of which may not cohere in all its details with any one or more of the others, but which, envisaged altogether in a collective galaxy of representation do get across to the reader the main point. The varying depictions of the formation of living organisms demonstrates this technique: The theory of the chance formation of disparate atoms into living creatures promulgated by the moon academician does not dovetail into the sun-spot man's account of the three coctions, or Gonzales's and the young moon philosopher's 'all in all' theories. If taken literally, the idea that Dyrcona may become a fly, or the cleric descend from a clump of grass, misses the point of the earlier atomic theory, where it is the exact number and combination of the differently shaped atoms which determines

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100. Cf. A.M., p. 15, vt. f, which reads in E, p. 20: 'Que si vous me demandez de quelle façon ces mondes ont esté faits, veu que la Sainte Escriture parle seulement d'un que Dieu créa, je respons que je ne dispute plus: Car si vous voulez m'obliger à vous rendre raison de ce que me fournit mon imagination, c'est m'oster la parole, et m'obliger de vous confesser que mon raisonnement le cèdera toujours en ces sortes de choses à la Foy', with L, p. 67, 'je ne deffere à l'autorité de personne, si elle ne vient de Dieu. Dieu qui tout seul doit estre crû de ce qu'il dit, a cause qu'il le dit'.

species.<sup>101</sup> If one views these discrepancies from the opposite angle, however, asking not, why are there such contradictions, but rather, what does the existence of such contradictions add up to, looking at the novels as a whole, then it is clear that this method of presentation has the epistemological advantage, which would not obtain in a fictional world which sought to ape the 'real' everyday one we all know, of allowing of the realization of a universe which takes for granted that the contradictory and the paradoxical may be the truth. The body of this thesis will attempt to show in more detail how important such a view of reality is in Cyrano's thought.

This essential cohesion of the dissimilar is expressed on a deeper level, in terms of the conditions of the narrative, in the situating of the Lune, and in the physically centrally located sun. The exposition of the Lune is of a figment or dream, and in M and P, this imaginary beginning is carried through into the denouement. The moon-earth parallel is introduced in conjunction with the home-coming of Dyrcona, to find a work of Cardano, open, of itself, at an appropriate page; the reversed world of the moon, the vehicle for the most forceful satire, is to be seen in this semi-magical light. The appearance of the hairy, devil-like Ethiopian, who snatches up an affeared Dyrcona, is cast in the same, essentially dream-like, mould. The series of pointes which set the beginning of the novel, culminating in the exact parallel, stylistically,

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101. A.M., pp. 75-8; 130-2; 45-52; 90-1; 162; 91.

of the monde renversé image and content, the perfect mirroring of trees in water, so that they appear to grow from summit to root, add verisimilitude to this setting, and ask the reader to suspend his disbelief. The same playing on representation/truth, fiction/reality, which suggests that the world of so-called truth or reality is as much a fiction as the clearly outrageous fictional world being portrayed is, for the duration of our reading of it, the truth, is seen in the circularité universelle episode, where Cyrano instructs the reader to regard this image of the human organism as a viable account of its life-force. The macro- micro-cosmic parallel is here used for its formal value, just as the formal and stylistic aspects of the novel are exploited as not only means by which to persuade, but, very often, as an inextricable component of the idea which is being expressed. It is on these grounds that the Autre Monde may justly be regarded as a creative work of literary merit, while it is by means of these same, essentially literary, techniques, that the moral significance of the two novels is imparted.

In the Lune, Cyrano lulls his reader into a false sense of security, while simultaneously upsetting his most firmly held convictions. On the one hand, he holds a mirror up to our daily experience of waking life and the nocturnal world of dream; on the other, he strikes a discordant note, questioning the validity of all the assumptions that go to make up that first, waking aspect of existence, and questioning it by means of the language of the second, unconscious, world, to which the seventeenth-century reader's civilisation allots

little credence. In the juxtaposition of the all too realistic description of the sorcery-hunt directed against Dyrcona, and his ensuing imprisonment and simulated pauperism, with the depiction of the very realm of Truth in the sun regions, something of the same antithesis is achieved. The authenticity of the Toulousain episode may be appreciated in the light of the description of his incarceration given by Théophile de Viau:

Ici d'ailleurs tout ce qu'on voit est repoussant, tout ce sur quoi on marche immonde, tout ce qu'on touche rugueux, tout ce qu'on mange infect, tout ce qu'on boit glacial.

This forms part of Théophile's first account of his imprisonment, Theophilus in Carcere, written in March 1624. The later Apologie au Roi of late 1625 depicts the harsher realities of extended deprivation of liberty combined with torture; still, with the exception of the interrogation, Cyrano's imaginary account is reminiscent of Théophile's memory of the reality.

Théophile writes:

D'abord que je fus pris, on me tint pour condamné. Ma détention fut un supplice et les prévôts les exécuteurs. Ils étaient trois sur chacun de mes bras, et autour de moi autant que le lieu par où je passais en pouvoit contenir. On m'enleva dans la chambre du sieur de Mévilier pour y faire mon procès-verbal, qui ne fut autre chose que l'inventaire de mes hardes et de mon argent, qui me fut tout saisi. Après l'interrogatoire qui ne contenait aucune accusation, Monsieur de Caumartin m'assura que j'étais mort. Je lui répondis que le roi était juste et moi innocent. . . . On m'attacha de grosses cordes partout et sur un cheval faible et boiteux, qui m'a fait courir plus de risques que tous les témoins de mes confrontations. L'exécution de quelque criminel bien célèbre n'a jamais eu plus de foule à son spectacle que je n'en eus à mon emprisonnement. Soudain que je fus écroué, on me dévala dans un cachot dont le

toit même était sous terre. Je couchais tout vêtu et charge de fers si rudes et si pesants que les marques et la douleur en demeurent encore en mes jambes. Les murailles y suaient d'humidité et moi de peur...<sup>102</sup>

Dyrcona's prison, as the way in which he is apprehended, is very similar to Théophile's. His peasant pursuers are just as enthusiastic as the town populace encountered by Théophile; he too, journeys to prison on a horse, in full view, and assumed guilty at the outset. Cyrano uses this idea to express the same pragmatic realism as witnessed to in his letter 'Contre les Sorciers':

Quoy que leur accusation soit ridicule [des paysans], je ne serois pas moins mort, quand une douzaine d'habiles gens qui m'auroient veu griller diroient que mes juges sont des sots. Tous les argumens dont ils prouveroient mon innocence ne me resusciteroient pas; et mes cendres demeureroient tout aussi froides dans un tombeau qu'a la voirie.

Dyrcona's cell is cramped, dark, and tomb-like; it is a pit at the end of a flight of stairs which affords descent only. Like Théophile's, it is knee-deep in mud, and a harbinger of animals (for Théophile, 'l'humidité de l'assiette et la pourriture de la paille ... engendroient des vers et autres animaux qu'il me fallait écraser à toute heure'; for Dyrcona, 'le gloussement terrible des crapaux qui pataugeoient dans la vase me faisoit souhaiter d'estre sourd; je sentois des lézards monter le long de mes cuisses, des couleuvres m'entortiller le col').<sup>103</sup> Cyrano emphasizes Dyrcona's increased sensitivity

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102. Théophile de Viau, Théophile en prison, Paris, 1967. pp. 68, 141-2. Cf. the second passage with the seizing of Dyrcona by the birds, A.M., p. 149: 'Je sentis mes bras chargez...'

103. A.M., pp. 103, 109, 117; cf. Théophile, op. cit., p. 146.

to noise and touch at the expense of sight. The realism of this episode is all the more prominent for its being sandwiched between the dream world of the moon and the perfect and wondrous realm of the sun. It is the closest that any of Cyrano's writing approaches to the tone and feel of a book he seems to have emulated: the Francion.

Cyrano's slant on the events he depicts, also, is in line with the ethos of the Francion: as well as the faithfulness of the reproduction of life in mid-seventeenth century France, there is an obvious sympathy with the outlook of the townsman and the nobility as contrasted with the ignorance and superstition of the peasantry; Dyrcona and Francion both despise the rabble, 'le vulgaire'; both tinge their description of them with wry humour; in both this episode of the Soleil and in Sorel's Histoire Comique brute reality is interspersed with allegorical dreams, but, unlike many literary, contrived, dreams, those of Cyrano and Sorel do bear some resemblance to the real thing. In both, the style appears wholly functional, and the narrative pared and fast moving.

Once Dyrcona has alighted on the sun-spot, however, he resumes the role of learner and observer of unbelievable phenomena. The sun as the realm of the essences of things is equally distanced in function from the earth and the moon: only the earthly paradise resembles it, in being the land of innocence, knowledge, and truth. It is akin to the Platonic realm of Ideas in that here is contained the very secret of Life in a perceptible form, the sun comprizing the essence of the souls of the dead.<sup>104</sup> Thus, Cyrano's difficulty lies

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104. A.M., p. 182.

in the need to represent that which no man knows, a problem obviated in the Lune when Dyrcona eats the rind of the apple from the tree of knowledge.<sup>105</sup> It is fitting, therefore, that the narrative technique in the second set of space travels is largely allegorical - analogies of every kind are imagined, alchemical, physical, emblematic, and mythological. If the humour and bite of the Lune and initial episode of the Soleil is lacking, this is but a function of the end which Cyrano has set himself, of its very nature unrealizable. One sympathizes with the difficulties such a task presents when the writer refuses to admit of the supernatural or the mystic; for the whole point of Dyrcona's journey is his discovery that all the wondrous realities he observes are natural, not miraculous.

The episodes of the Soleil expound the same basic physical theories as those already described in the Lune; in this, as in some of the fictional conditions of their telling (notably the bird trial, a parallel of the lunar one), the reader feels that much of what Cyrano has to recount is a déjà vu; because of this as much as of the lack of incisiveness in the narrative, the Soleil seems a less original or attractive work than the Lune.

Overall, the singleness of purpose of Cyrano's work outweighs the tendency to repetition or the less engaging quality of some of his descriptions, puns, or personal quarrels. It is this universe as an entity which I shall attempt to

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105. A.M., p. 32.

characterize in the body of this thesis. In the Autre Monde, the substratum of that universe is its physical depiction, for on this the moral evaluations of Cyrano are built. What is that physical universe like, and what aspects of it does Cyrano stress?



CHAPTER IITHE PHYSICAL UNIVERSE IN L'AUTRE MONDE

The physical theories expressed in the Autre Monde have been considered from many points of view, ranging from that of the historian of science to that of the dabbler in occultist curiosities. At one extreme is the study of J-J. Bridenne of the theories of flight suggested in the two novels, each examined in detail in his article 'Cyrano de Bergerac et la science aéronautique', published in 1954 by the Revue des sciences humaines (pp. 241-58); at the other, E. Canseliet's survey of 'Cyrano de Bergerac, philosophe hermétique', an article tending to reduce both works to a magico-alchemical level, published in the first number of the Cahiers d'Hermès, in 1947 (pp. 65-82). A somewhat more systematic, and thereby more serious, treatment of this second aspect is afforded by the Italian Cyranian critic, Luciano Erba, in his 'L'incidenza della magia nell'opera di Cyrano de Bergerac' (pp. 1 to 74 of Contributi del Seminario di Filologia Moderna- Serie francese, vol. I, published in Milan, 1960, by the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore). Perhaps by virtue of the very nature of his subject, Erba does not prove conclusively the alchemical import of the Autre Monde, let alone an alchemical intent on the part of Cyrano. In any case, this approach to the study of Cyrano's ideas about the physical universe is as partial and as fragmented as is, at the other extreme, Bridenne's, in the sense that

there is a deliberate effort made to single out specific aspects of Cyrano's physical theories, selected according to purely external criteria taken from modern aeronautics on the one hand and occultism on the other.

My aim here is rather to examine the physical ideas expressed in the Autre Monde wholly within the context of that work, though, of course, this approach presupposes an awareness of the physical theories current in Cyrano's day, and the relating of those ideas promulgated by the characters of the Lune and the Soleil, and through the descriptive episodes of the Soleil, to seventeenth-century philosophy. A number of studies exist which, taken together, portray the physical theories propounded in the novels in a framework of the thought of Cyrano's contemporaries. In 1940, in her published thesis entitled Das Weltbild in Cyrano de Bergeracs Roman L'Autre Monde (Mannheim, 81pp.), Maria Meder examined the main physical notions in the work in this context; Annette Lavers does likewise in the third chapter of her unpublished M.A. thesis, presented in 1958 to the University of London. In his French Free-thought (London, 1960, ch. III), Professor Spink characterizes Cyrano's ideas in a survey which follows the order of their presentation in the novels, while, in an article on the sun inhabitants' metamorphoses (published in Literature and Science, Oxford, 1955, pp. 144-50), he examined the notion of pure act in Cyrano's essentially monistic universe. In La Pensée philosophique et scientifique de Cyrano de Bergerac, Geneva, 1970, Madeleine Alcover examines the physical theories of the various characters of the Lune, and of characters and

episodes in the Soleil, in this way enabling the contradictions and conflicts between different sets of ideas to be made apparent. Her method includes a cross check in the form of a final section in which the philosophical and scientific ideas of the novels as a whole are summarized. In terms of the main tenets of the Autre Monde the ground has been covered by the scholarship of the past thirty-five years. This chapter takes for granted a knowledge of such studies, and of the main ideas of the physical universe described in Cyrano's imaginative works. Rather than repeat these studies, I have attempted to build on them, and to approach the subject from a slightly different angle, attempting to show how Cyrano's descriptions of the universe relate to the novels themselves; that is, how this universe is the universe of the novels, as distinct from the 'real' world outside of them. Through the varying pictures of the universe presented in the Lune and Soleil, taking into account the conflicting details evident when they are accepted at their face value, I shall try to elucidate the constants which yet emerge despite, or even because of, these variants.

If we examine the Autre Monde in terms of the physical theories expounded there, we discover that there are two concepts which are never gainsaid, and upon which the varying and sometimes contradictory hypotheses or doctrines of the narrative depend, namely, a panpsychic monism and a belief that fire is the essential life-giving force. In a universe described as infinite and eternal, there is no need of a divine creator; given that all can be accounted for materially, there is no need of a spiritual substance at all. In Dyrcona's discussions

with the viceroy of Canada, where the existence of God is assumed by both speakers, the positing of an infinite universe and of Copernican-style, heliocentric, worlds within it, lays the foundation of an universe without God or divine Providence, in which a fiery principle assumes an ubiquitous activating and moulding role. Already in this episode, change is seen to be effected without the aid of a first cause or of any external impetus: new worlds constantly come into being, suggests Dyrcona, not out of nothing or chaos, but from the burnt-out matter of the various suns which then support them.<sup>1</sup> An infinite number of worlds in an infinite universe, non-limited in time and space, is one of the conditions of the elimination of the idea of God: it allows of the Socratic daemon's concept of himself and of all living things as wholly material, just as it provides at the outset of the story the macro-correspondence on which the later Cironalité universelle episode explicitly depends; the parallel is clearly indicated in the introductory proposition of the second episode, 'Il me reste à vous prouver qu'il y a des Mondes infinis dans un Monde infini'.<sup>2</sup>

The daemon's materialism, in its turn, provides the basis for the religious satire of the later episodes of the Lune; in particular, the young moon philosopher's diatribe against personal immortality is dependent upon his belief that the soul is but an amalgam of the sensuous characteristics, or means of

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1. A.M., pp. 15-16.

2. A.M., p. 71.

expression, of any organism. If the lunarian does not explain his premises, is this not precisely because these are known to the reader through the daemon's earlier pronouncements, and supported by the belief of the Spaniard, Gonzales, that all matter is one? All three characters concur in their conviction that all is in all.<sup>3</sup>

The lynch-pin of Cyrano's universe is materialism. It is first stated categorically by the daemon, who, says Dyrcona, told him that 'il n'y avoit rien en la Nature qui ne fut matériel'.<sup>4</sup> However, he points out, at the same time, that the material substance is not equatable with that which man can touch. The daemon sheds and assumes a body perceptible by men according to circumstance: those mysterious and apparently wondrous phenomena generally regarded as the vehicles of sorcery, or of the supernatural, 'Oracles, Nymphes, Génies, Fées, Dieux-Foyers, Lemures, Larves, Lamies, Farfadets, Nayades, Incubes, Ombres, Mânes, Spectres, Phantosmes', are all merely manifestations of daemons who originated in the sun, but who assumed these forms only until the reign of Augustus Caesar. (Thus, they, like their counterpart, miracles, take their place in history, though they have to do with an a-historical dimension of reality). The daemon's tutees, likewise, include some of the most famous magicians and sorcerers in Europe: Agrippa, Jean Trithème, Dr. Faustus, and, in the reign of Louis XIII, La Brosse and 'César' as well as the knights of the Rosy-

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3. A.M., pp. 45-52; 90-1; 94-5.

4. A.M., p. 37.

Cross.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the notion of supernatural intervention is debunked obliquely, in a pleasant and harmless way: nowhere does the daemon mention miracles save in a figurative sense, and when, later, the young moon philosopher criticizes the concept, he does so in a non-Christian context (of the physician's purported cures),<sup>6</sup> yet, clearly, it, like sorcery or magic, can find no place in an universe in which all phenomena, being material, are natural.

If man mistakes the purely material for the supernatural or occult, this is merely because his range of sense perceptions is too narrow to apprehend all phenomena on their own terms:

Vous vous imaginés, vous autres, que ce que vous ne scauriez comprendre est spirituel, ou qu'il n'est point; la conséquence en est très faulce, mais c'est un tesmoignage qu'il y a dans l'Univers un million peut-estre de choses qui, pour estre connus, demanderoient en vous un million d'organes tous différens. Moy, par exemple, je conçois par mes sens la cause de la sympathie de l'aiman avec le pôle, celle du reflux de la mer, ce que l'animal devient après la mort; vous autres ne scauriés donner jusques à ces haultes conceptions, à cause que les proportions à ces miracles vous manquent, non plus qu'un aveugle-né ne scauroit s'imaginer ce que c'est que la beauté d'un paysage, le coloris d'un tableau, les nuances de l'iris, ou bien il se le figurera tantost comme un manger, tantost

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5. A.M., pp. 34-5. The identity of 'César' is not clear: could the reference be to Vanini (whose real Christian names were 'Giulio Cesare' and not 'Lucilio' - cf. Spink, French Free-thought, pl 28, n.1)? But cf. also, Lachèvre's note, A.M., p.34, n.4.
  6. A.M., pp. 91-3. The whole question of the attack on the concept of the miracle and of the supernatural in Cyrano's work is treated very adequately by Erica Harth in the first two chapters of her Cyrano de Bergerac and the Polemics of Modernity, New York, 1970.

comme un son, tantost comme une odeur; tout de mesme si je voulois vous expliquer ce que je perçois par les sens qui vous manquent, vous vous le représenteriez comme quelque chose qui peut estre oüy, veu, touché, fleuré, ou savouré, et ce n'est rien cependant de tout cela.<sup>7</sup>

Cyrano carries to the most generalized conclusion the tenet of the Italian Naturalist thinkers of the sixteenth century, that all may be explained naturally; while he names neither Pomponazzi nor Vanini directly, similarities with aspects of the first thinker's work, the De Incantationibus, as with his disciple's Amphitheatrum and to a lesser extent, his De Arcanis, are evident. Cyrano, by contrast, does not appear to believe so credulously, in fact, in the wondrous, and far-fetched, ideas or incidents which he describes.<sup>8</sup> While the daemon restricts his explanation to the sensory phenomena, he

7. A.M., pp. 37-8.

8. Cf. the introduction as well as the text of Henri Busson's French edition of the De Incantationibus, entitled Les Causes des merveilles de la nature ou les enchantements, Paris, 1930. On the close borrowing of Pomponazzi's text by Vanini, see ibid., pp. 80-2. On Vanini's admitted debt to Pomponazzi in his notion of the miracle, see Spink, French Free-thought p. 39. Like Pomponazzi, but also like his successor, Cardano (cf. his De Subtilitate), Cyrano debunks miracles and possessions on the grounds that phenomena purported to be such can occur by natural means; he believes in the power of the imagination to effect physiological changes; he uses the notion of microcosm and natural balm, in the Circularité universelle passage (though not in the literal way that Pomponazzi does), and, like the Paduan, disdains the ignorant, and superstitious populace. However, both Cardano and Pomponazzi found their belief that all may be accounted for naturally on the premise that Nature includes, and is ruled by, astral influence, since, for both, the cosmos is finite and Aristotelian. Cyrano could equally well have culled his ideas in part from some or all of the following inheritors of these Paduans' philosophy: Montaigne, Campanella, Théophile, Naudé - a pupil of Cremonini, Guy Patin, or Gassendi, as can be inferred from Busson's documentation. The notion that daemons, or 'familiars', exist could derive equally well from Pomponazzi, Cardano, Montaigne, or Campanella.

has included in his list of tutees Campanella:

Ce fut moy qui l'advisé, pendant qu'il estoit à l'Inquisition à Rome, de stiler son visage et son corps aux grimasses et aux postures ordinaires de ceux dont il avoit besoin de connoistre l'intérieur afin d'exciter chez soy, par une mesme assiette, les pensées que cette mesme situation avoit appelées dans ses adversaires.<sup>9</sup>

Thought is but a function of an organism, in exactly the same way as is personality, the ability to grow, or to feel.

The daemon's notions are founded on a complete vision of the world; this becomes obvious in the later episodes of the Lune, which at once work independently of the earlier one and build on it. The Spaniard's version of the 'all in all' theory emphasizes the homogeneity of matter, and thus complements the daemon's monism; the moon academician's atomic explanation of the formation of all organisms, together with its corollary, the atomic nature of sense perception, provides the missing link which at once renders plausible the 'all in all' theory and the ubiquitous role of matter in all natural phenomena. Since every atom contains within it, by virtue of its shape, its own principle of movement, there is no need of any external force to account for life - a form of movement - or its counterpart, death. The lunarian's atomic theory of chance formation of living organisms includes the fiery atom, the most mobile and penetrative atom owing to its round shape conjoined with pyramid-shaped components. It is the combination

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9. A.M., p. 35.



of atoms which decides the species of a creature, and not the will to produce a particular type of living organism; it is the combination of atoms also which decides the direction of the movement, and the subsequent character of the formation of the atoms that are to be conjoined. Thus, the moon academician's atomic theory would suffice to account not only for sense perception and personality in a given organism, but for every material change in an infinite universe. He does indeed suggest that the rational, just as the sensitive or purely vegetative, organism is nothing other than the particular combination of atoms which it is expressing: it is pure chance that, for example, an oak tree is an oak tree,

un peu moins de certaines figures, c'eust esté  
un Orme, un Peuplier, un Saule, un Sureau, de  
la Bruyère, de la Mousse; un peu plus de  
certaines autres figures, c'eust esté la plante  
sensitive, une Huître à l'escaille, un Ver,  
une Mouche, une Grenouille, un Moineau, un  
Singe, un Homme.<sup>10</sup>

If we reverse this theory, and consider the process in the opposite direction, presumably all matter 'feels', or is sensitive in some way; or, in other words, all matter 'knows', the quality or extent of its knowing being dependent on the nature of its atomic structure. Such an idea is nowhere stated in this specific way, yet the two main episodes preceding

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10. A.M., pp. 76-7. Cf. the alternative theories of the Soleil, which are all embracing, also, viz., the trois coctions theory of the sun-spot man, and the allegory of the three rivers, of memory, imagination, and judgment, into which flow the five streams of the senses, where both the rivers and the streams irrigate the matter of the sun, to be partaken of by man and beast alike (A.M., pp. 130-2; 187-90.).

this one, like the 'all in all' theories of the daemon, Gonzales, and the young moon philosopher, and like the notion of the transposition of matter, which Cyrano terms 'la metempsychose', attendant upon it, both suggest exactly the same inference. Let us, then, now consider these two episodes.

The daemon's story of the intellectual cabbage illustrates the basic homogeneity of being, growing, feeling, and knowing, and also repeats in a more generalized form the main idea expressed in his earlier account of his own nature. The first moon academician's account of Cironalité universelle, like the atomic theory of the second academician which follows it, is self-supporting and autonomous. It is of particular interest in that it provides an alternative theory of sensation, knowing, even life itself, while, at the same time, using elements more fully developed in other episodes. The idea of the human organism's being formed of, and enlivened by, autonomous living beings - mites - with the soul of the greater organism consisting in 'l'action de ces petites bestes',<sup>11</sup> parallels closely the notion of man as an amalgam of differently shaped, dynamic, atoms; but, in the initial parallel made in the proposition 'Il me reste à vous prouver qu'il y a des Mondes infinis dans un Monde infini',<sup>12</sup> the notion of the infinitely small, or of mites in mites ad infinitum, is surely

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11. A.M., p. 72.

12. A.M., p. 71.

posited, a notion which conflicts with that of the atom, a non-destructible, non-separable, body, which yet has size. This paradox, of the basic similarity of the ideas expressed in episodes which contain conflicting details from the one to the next, is a consistent feature of both novels. Thus, for instance, there are multifarious explanations of the 'creation' of living organisms, starting with the hypothesis of Dyrcona as to the formation of worlds and continents, in the Canadian episode, and ranging from the 'Cironalité universelle' obverse of that, to the all-embracing atomic theory, and, in the Soleil, to the trois coctions witnessed by Dyrcona on the sun-spot, and culminating in the spectacle of instant creation, or 'pure act', provided by the sun inhabitants, when they form themselves into a wondrous tree, and then, before Dyrcona, change into a handsome youth.

The atomic theory of the lunar academician would suffice as an explanation of all change, and of life itself; yet, Cyrano makes a point of emphasizing the penetrative and formative role of fire. In all his accounts of movement of whatever kind, fire has a part to play: if it is not central in the case of his atomic theory, this is an exception which is readily understood within the terms of the episode. It is the fact that fire is singled out at all which is of interest. The sun-inhabitants' metamorphoses are, perhaps, the most central to Cyrano's vision of the physical universe just because, here, the two basic themes of materialistic monism and the fashioning role of fire are accorded equal weight in an essentially corpuscular theory of the living organism. Life

itself is a movement inseparable from matter, for the sun inhabitants are composed of fiery atoms, live in fiery climes on a fiery globe - the sun, and can be all things, water (a river), mineral (the gold, silver, emeralds, carbuncles, chrysolite, amber, diamonds, and pearls that make up the tree and its fruits), vegetation (the tree itself), birds (the nightingale and the eagles), man (the handsome youth), and even an inanimate object (the boat on the river in which the nightingale and eagles travelled).<sup>13</sup> In one episode all the themes central to Cyrano's physics come together: here there is no conflict between atomic 'creation' and fiery 'creation', between the autonomy of the individual organism and the 'all in all' theory, between the diversity of the inanimate and the animate, and of species, and the simplicity and unity of one matter, between the notion of a passive matter and an activating fire, between the notion of body and of soul (the king of the sun inhabitants is of the same nature as his subjects, though to a greater intensity). Attraction or conjoining, antipathy or disintegration, life and 'death', are but aspects of one being, the sun inhabitants being each in turn, and also being capable, like the mites, of autonomous existence while forming an integral part of whatever type of organism to which their king wishes them to belong inextricably.

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13. A.M., pp. 138-47. Cf. J. S. Spink's article 'Form and Structure: Cyrano de Bergerac's atomistic conception of Metamorphosis' in Literature and Science, Oxford, 1954, pp. 144-50.

In all this, they exemplify his universe.

Just as, at one extreme, a material notion of the universe such as atomism can account for all phenomena, so, at the other, one kind of matter, fire, can do the same. If Cyrano's monism represents a way of envisaging the universe - as at once an unity and a manifold, so, likewise, his insistence on the crucial role of fire represents something other than a purely physical concept. For the fiery principle is both a part of Cyrano's physics and representative of a set of values.<sup>14</sup> Thus, it is insufficient in terms of Cyrano's criteria to ask whether or not his atomic theory would be adequate as an account of natural phenomena, without taking into account the special role he allots throughout the Autre Monde to the fiery principle. It is for exactly the same reasons that matter is now spoken of as inclusive of fire, now as separate from it:<sup>15</sup> in describing Matter, in both instances, it is conceived of as the monistic basis of his universe, just as fire is envisaged as the very principle of life. Seen in

14. See J. S. Spink, 'Libertinage et "spinozisme": la théorie de l'ame ignée' in French Studies, 1947, pp. 218-22. What follows in this section of the present chapter is built on the theories discussed in this article.
15. See, for example, A.M., p. 50 ('Car qu'ilz choisissent le feu, mesme le plus destaché de la matière'), and p. 126 ('ce qui brûle n'est pas le feu, mais la matière où il est attaché... le feu du Soleil ne peut estre meslé d'aucune matière'); contrast, A.M., p. 46, where 'le feu ... n'est rien que de l'air beaucoup estendu' or 'de la terre encore plus respandue qu'elle ne l'est pour constituer l'air', and p. 76, where fire, like the rest of matter, is determined by its atomic shape.

this light, many of the apparent contradictions and discrepancies in detail which occur when one considers each physical description literally, disappear as they take on their full, symbolical meaning. In this sense, Cyrano's so-called 'physics' is no less metaphorical than the linguistic images which he uses to portray it. What, then, does fire represent for Cyrano, and how does his concept of it cohere with that of matter as a whole?

In the majority of the episodes of the Lune, fire is distinguishable from the rest of matter mainly on account of its greater mobility: it fashions more quickly and more effectively simply because it is more dynamic. It shares with sympathy and antipathy the ability to bring masses together, or to separate them, to penetrate or to amass, but whereas sympathy necessarily means joining like to like, and antipathy a conflict, fire, when it acts on other matter, is equally capable of forcing together the similar and the disparate. It is 'le constructeur et le destructeur des parties et du tout de l'Univers'; though, like Democritus, Cyrano conceives of the atom as a self-propelling force, and thus, does not need a conjoining principle such as the clinamen, he yet insists that it is this fashioning force, itself atomic, which has 'poussé et ramassé dans un Chesne la quantité des figures nécessaires à composer ce Chesne'. If the lunar academician's theory remains one of chance, it is only because, here, fire is envisaged as a material force rather than as a knowing guiding principle: unlike God, it has no will or over-all pre-conceived plan. Yet, it is afforded a special role

notwithstanding. For, if atomic shape permits of variety in an infinite, but monistic, whole, it is fire which particularizes that diversity, at once causing an even greater number of variables in an equally distinct set of patterns, by the formation of living organisms. It is the very idea of diversity through a single principle which is the constant in this atomic theory: fire can behave differently in conjunction with diversely shaped atoms,

la feu a ... des effects différens selon l'ouverture et la quantité [1657: qualité] des angles, où la figure ronde se joint, comme par exemple le feu du poivre est autre chose que le feu du sucre, le feu du sucre que celui de la canelle, celui de la canelle que celui du clou de girofle, et celui-cy que le feu du fagot.

The variant noted in this quotation would suggest that the question of whether this atomic system is basically of a qualitative or quantitative nature is of secondary importance.<sup>16</sup>

If we follow through the corollary of this theory, we discover that, at least in this episode, Cyrano does admit of the importance of all material forces, and not just fire, in his atomic theory of sense perception. Since light is conceived of throughout the Autre Monde as heatless fire, it necessarily plays a main part in sight. However, Cyrano

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16. All the quotations made in this paragraph are from A.M., p. 76; cf. the last one with the Soleil, A.M., pp. 126-7 ('cette poudre de bluettes .... de corps qu'il remue'). On the question of quality and quantity, cf. M. Alcover, La Pensée philosophique et scientifique, p. 67: 'C'est un mécanisme pur, en ce sens que leur physique [des docteurs de l'Académie] est essentiellement quantitative', and cf. a similar variant, A.M., p. 47, vt. a, which runs counter to Alcover's argument.

chooses the more complex visual process of seeing an object in a mirror to illustrate this faculty's workings, and presumably does so in order to bring in the idea of simulacra: the eye transmits 'cette poussière de feu qu'on appelle rayons visuels', which, when it encounters an object, ricochets off it to return to the eye, meeting on its way a tiny corpuscular image of the object, consisting in matter being continuously emitted from it. Nowhere here does Cyrano account for the directional element: is it chance that the light travels back in the same direction as that whence it came, or that the object's emitted atoms should be travelling in the same path as the atoms of light?

Hearing, too, is illustrated by a special example: that of listening to a stringed instrument - the lute. The process is simpler; when plucked, the strings push the small bodies of which the air is composed towards the brain, which is pierced by them. The strings serve exactly the same role as had done fiery light in vision, but here the directional impulse afforded by the string is clearly comprehensible.

The three other senses are more directly occasioned: when we touch, we cause a greater number of particles than usual to be cast from the object felt; we, in our turn, feel more or less intensely according to the thickness of our skin an object outside ourselves, and, when being touched, according to the proximity of the part of our body affected to the head. This last idea does suggest a centre of recognition in the human being, in the same way that, in the cironalité episode,



the mites, though autonomous organisms, recognize the superior directive power over them of their 'cocher', will-power.<sup>17</sup>

Taste operates in the same manner as fire expresses itself in divers corpuscular situations, for, as our food hits our palate it impinges upon it according to the shape of its constituent atoms, the intensity and quality of the impact being directly proportional to that shape. Smell is generally agreed to accord the most pervasive sensed data: 'De l'odorat, je n'ay rien à dire, puisque vos Philosophes mesmes confessent qu'il se faict par une émission continuelle de petits corps qui se déprennent de leur masse et qui frappent nostre nez en passant'.<sup>18</sup>

In his atomic account of man's sensual apprehension of the world, then, fire is but one of the forces responsible for our awareness of it, for it is the notion of repetition of phenomena in an universe in which all moves at random which is being expressed in this episode; directional intent is not only an irrelevant concept, but one which cuts across the basic theme. What is notable is the success with which Cyrano has managed to characterize, and differentiate subtly, the various senses in relation each to the others with the minimum of physical principles. All phenomena result from the confrontation of one force or more with another: fire

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17. A.M., p. 71.

18. A.M., pp. 78-81; quotation from p.81.

is superior in intensity rather than in kind. The moon academician explains emotional response in exactly the same terms, but here fire is again the determinant. Like all the other speakers in the two novels, he is at pains to explain all things by one theory: the episode ends only because he is interrupted in his attempt so to do.

Throughout the Autre Monde, emotions, desire or will-power, and the force of the imagination are all determined by the intensity of the heat of the body. What we feel emotionally, just as the success with which we enact our desires or imaginings, is directly proportional to our natural heat or lack of it; in this, all that we do or are is corporally controlled, and dependent upon what we should call our 'energy'. When music is heard, this incites to joy, anger, pity, dreaming, or grief, variously, according as the movement of the air pushed by the musical instrument's strings impinges on the fire of the blood, inclining this to its own rhythm; when sufficiently violent, 'il anime ce feu à se pousser dehors: c'est ce que nous appellons: ardeur de courage'.<sup>19</sup> Conversely, the moon prosecutor chooses a trumpet to plead his case expressly in order to control the emotional response of both Dyrcona and the judges:

c'estoit une trompette qu'il avoit tout  
 exprès choisie affin que la violence de  
 ce ton martial eschauffast leurs esprits  
 à ma mort, et affin d'empescher par cette

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19. A.M., p. 80: I have referred to the 1657 reading; in the manuscripts, the air carrying the musical impulse meets the fire of our blood, which is susceptible to the same rhythm (cf. vt. f), rather than obliged to adopt it.

emotion que le raisonnement ne pût faire son office, comme il arrive dans nos armées, où ce tintamarre de trompettes et de tambours empesche le soldat de réfléchir sur l'importance de sa vie. 20

Joy and courage - or their opposites - are evoked in direct proportion to the compatibility between the stimulus and the organism receiving it. An additional factor is the habitat of the organism, so that, though in the solar regions Dyrcona is capable of feats impossible for him to enact on earth, or on the moon, such as flying without the aid of a machine, bouncing along instead of walking, and comprehending immediately the language of truth, he still feels more comfortable in the shadier areas of the sun. The sun inhabitants, like the daemon who originated from that world, reared in its fiery environs, can perform feats impossible to man; the daemon can do so even out of its immediate influence, while the sun inhabitants, fiery in nature themselves, and surrounded by fire, can perform all things, even be all things, quite naturally. For, ultimately, heat governs all: its very superior quality in degree lends it superiority in kind, while thus rendering it simultaneously distinct from, and a part of, the whole. In this, also, the universe is at once one and an, almost, infinite variety in that singleness.

It is because of this dual role played by the fiery

principle that thoughts, desires, and emotions can all effect changes in the body; in Cyrano's universe there can be nothing like the separation of body and mind as conceived of by a Descartes, for the two are equally corporeal in nature. If the violence of the trumpet's tones can incite to blind courage, so, too, doleful airs can cause the disintegration of the body of the listener: the birds employ just such a method of corporal punishment.<sup>21</sup> The death of a philosopher bears exactly the same tangible quality, albeit a humorous one, for, the images and ideas in his head being as corporeal as everything else in the universe, there comes a time when, too numerous, they split open his skull.<sup>22</sup> The correspondence between the image and its realization is the same as that between the simulacra emitted from bodies and their source in that object. Whether the micro-representation is inside the head, or in space outside, and whether it is the derivation of, or is derived from, its larger representative is accidental. Thus, it is consistent that Campanella must know the thoughts of those whose corporeal stance he imitates, that the pregnant woman may, by desiring the person she contemplates (by looking at his portrait), imprint his feature (and thus, presumably, also his nature) on the embryo within her, and that he who simulates madness, like Gallus Vitius, should necessarily become mad.<sup>23</sup> Eve's inability to overcome her bodily weight

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21. A.M., p. 156.

22. A.M., p. 191.

23. A.M., pp. 35, 177-8; 146.

owing to the lack of warmth of the feminine sex as compared with the male one,<sup>24</sup> is but the obverse of the sun inhabitants' instant metamorphoses: they are as incapable of not becoming what they imagine as she of becoming it. Since imagination consists in forming images in the mind, given a sufficient impulsion through our bodily heat, these micro-bodies must be realized in the macro-organism which contains them in a part of itself. If they are not, this is invariably imputable to a heat deficiency. Thus, for example, the woman whose imaginative force is wanting may give birth to a 'monster', or incomplete representation of the portrait contemplated. In this way, heat is the regulator of natural phenomena, at once accounting for the different kinds of creature and their responses, and for all those exceptions to the rule.<sup>25</sup> The three coctions theory of the sun-spot man, enacted before Dyrcona, illustrates this homogeneity of principle in a variant form, for here too, heat is the controlling factor multiplied by duration.

It is heat which initially creates the stabilising agent of humidity, by causing the earth to sweat, and it is the ratio between the two which decides the number of coctions to which any lump of matter is subject - one forming a vegetative creature, two a sensitive one, and three a human being who

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24. A.M., p.23; cf. pp. 136-7 (ce vigoureux élan .... où elle tend'), and p. 145 ('Vous autres Hommes .... votre imagination').

25. A.M., p. 146.

ratiocinates. Just as each creature has a natural habitat, man being happiest in shadowy regions, daemons and sun inhabitants in hot climes, so there is a perfect time in which to form a living being of a given heat intensity: horses requiring a year's gestation are yet less endowed than man, for nine months is the exact time needed to produce a rational creature of the heat intensity natural to man, while the horse is, by temperament, colder.<sup>26</sup> This variant on the theme of creation and the role of fire in it is interesting in so far that it tends to beg the questions it seeks to answer. If heat causes the very existence of humidity, then one must assume that fire is ultimately the equivalent of its contrary, radical cold or humidity; since the 'trois coctions' occur on the sun, a fiery globe, this is not inconsistent with the findings of Dyrcona on the moon, where the two, equally necessary to maintain life, exist separately.<sup>27</sup> The introduction of a time factor to explain the temperament which the coctions are supposed to be responsible for, however, seems to be something of a circular argument, and one which forces Cyrano into falling back on his, admittedly oft-used, expedient of antipathy - the horse is born in months antipathetic to those which produce men, for the temperament of each is anti-

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26. A.M., pp. 130-1.

27. On the sun, radical cold is heat: see A.M., p. 125; contrast the Lune, where they are opposites (A.M., p. 22; pp. 50-1).

pathetic, explains the sun-spot man.

In all these instances, fire would seem to act as necessarily as does the rest of matter, though in so doing it acts on its less mobile, and in this more passive, material recipients. Even when the remora, representing radical cold, vanquishes the salamander, or 'beast of fire', killing it, the fiery properties of the beast remain in its skin and members,<sup>28</sup> This episode, notwithstanding, is the exception to the rule in the Autre Monde, for it is the sole occasion on which fire receives rather than instigates; though apparently automatic in its workings, fire nevertheless accounts for all phenomena, whether they be within the bounds of predictability or not. How then does Cyrano manage to convince us that it differs in kind from the rest of matter, while yet being an integral part of a monistic and infinite unity, namely, the universe?

Already at the beginning of the Lune, the still earth-bound Dyrcona is at pains to show the viceroy of Canada that the sun is a special globe, on account of its life-giving properties:

Il est du sens commun de croire que le Soleil a pris place au centre de l'Univers, puis que tous les corps qui sont dans la Nature ont besoin de ce feu radical ...; de mesme que la sage Nature a placé les parties génitales dans l'homme, les pépins dans le centre des pommes, les noyaux au milieu de leur fruit ... Car cette pomme est un petit univers à soy-mesme dont le pépin, plus chaud que les autre parties, est le soleil qui respand autour de soy la chaleur conservatrice de son globe ... Cela donc supposé, je dis que la terre ayant besoin de la lumière, de la chaleur et de l'influence de ce grand feu, elle se tourne autour de luy pour recevoir

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28. A.M., pp. 180-1 ('Avec le corps de cet animal ... y voyoient reluire').

esgalement en toutes ses parties cette vertu qui la conserve. Car il seroit aussy ridicule de croire que ce grand corps lumineux tournast autour d'un point dont il n'a que faire, que de s'ymaginer quand nous voyons une allouette rostie qu'on a, pour la cuire, tourné la cheminée à l'entour .... Encore nous qui sommes assurés de la rondeur de la Terre, il nous est aisé de conclure son mouvement par sa figure.<sup>29</sup>

Dyrcona conceives of an universe peopled with an infinite number of sun-centred worlds; in the rest of the narrative he concentrates on the central position of the sun, rather than on the infinite repetition of world systems like our own, and does so even to the point of describing our system as the 'universe'. Both in his arguments for heliocentricity, and in the looseness of his terminology in differentiating between the infinite macro-universe and each of its innumerable world-systems, Cyrano has eminent predecessors, firstly, in Copernicus, who uses precisely the same reasoning in establishing his finite, heliocentric cosmos, and secondly, in Bruno and Campanella, in the emphasis now on all those notions attendant upon the positing of infinite space, now on the special role of the sun in the new astronomy. It is Cyrano, however, who brings together the Nolan's idea of a world soul which is at once in everything and superior in quality, and Campanella's insistence on the unique attributes of the sun. In one respect, notwithstanding, Cyrano parts

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29. A.M., pp. 11-12.



company with all these forerunners: he dispenses entirely with the theistic framework of the philosophies of the two Italian naturalists and of Copernicus before them, just as he disregards the clearly hermetic connotations in the thought of all three thinkers, and the peculiarly astrological context of the Città del Sole.<sup>30</sup>

Like Dyrcona, in his adherence to the new astronomy, the moon men also allot a special role to solar worlds:

Hormis les criminels tout le monde est bruslé: aussy est-ce une coustume très décente et très raisonnable, car nous croyons que le feu ayant séparé le pur de l'impur, et de sa chaleur, rassemblé par sympathie cette chaleur naturelle qui faisoit l'Ame, il luy donne la force de s'eslever tousjours en montant jusqu'à quelque astre, la terre de certains peuples plus immatériels que nous, plus intellectuels, parce que leur tempérament doit correspondre et participer à la pureté du globe qu'ilz habitent, et que cette flamme radicale, s'estant encore rectifiée par la subtilité des élémens de ce Monde-là, elle vient à composer un des bourgeois de ce pays enflambé.<sup>31</sup>

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30. Cf. Dyrcona's defence of heliocentricity with Copernicus, Des Révolutions des orbes célestes, original Latin text, and French translation by A. Koyré, Paris, 1934, pp. 115-6 ('In medio omnium residet Sol .... astrorum familiarum'); p. 74 ('Atqui si caelum nihil .... motus attribuitur'); p. 67: 'Mobilitas enim sphaerae est in circulum volvi', and p. 92. The fallacy of imputing movement to the earth on account of its shape, while yet denying movement to the identically shaped sun, derives from Copernicus. Cyrano does not adopt the main elements of the theory which attracted Copernicus himself, those of the beauty, harmony, symmetry, geometrical neatness, and perfect nature of the spherical form, all reflections of divine providence (cf. ibid, pp. 50-7), but he does appreciate the simplicity of this system. On the astrologico-hermetic connotations of the Città, see F. Yates, Giordano Bruno and the hermetic Tradition, London, 1964, ch. xx.

31. A.M., pp. 85-6. Cf. Spink, 'Libertinage et "spinozisme"', p. 221.

What is here clearly used above all for its satirical import, becomes the very structure on which the incidents of the Soleil are based, from the moment that Dyrcona leaves his earthly prison to his projected meeting with the defunct Descartes. Whereas in the Lune, the idea that men have a soul is a premise which is understood throughout, the notion of its nature varies from episode to episode: in the Cironalité universelle theory of the first academician it is the very action of the mites, for the second lunar academician it is 'ce feu qui se meut de soy-mesme'; the daemon is the odd-man-out when, in explaining why the lunarians do not honour their parents, he points out that our soul derives from heaven; however, if he means by this that individual souls derive from a collective world-soul located in the heavens, then this notion of soul is in keeping with the role played by the sun, as world-soul, in the Soleil. In the passage just quoted, the soul is, indeed, a fire, while, for the young moon philosopher, it is essentially nothing more than the expression of the organism, and, in this, perhaps most akin to the mites theory.<sup>32</sup> In all these assumptions, save perhaps the daemon's, the common factor is the wish to explain the oneness of an organism and its self-expression without positing a being separate and different in nature from it. This would account for the uncharacteristic asymmetry of these ideas and

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32. A.M., pp. 72; 78; 64; 86; 93-5. Re the daemon's concept of a heaven-sent soul, cf. Spink, French Free-thought, p. 245, and below, Ch. V, pp. 255-6.

the lack of visual or descriptive correspondence between individual soul and the sun, which, in the Soleil, is to be explicitly termed the soul of the world.<sup>33</sup> Thus, though from the outset of the Lune, the sun is at the centre of its world system, there is no specific location for each organism's soul.

If throughout the Lune it is made clear that fire is a force radical to life, there are shifting viewpoints as to what ultimately is the source of movement. Gonzales, in supposing that there exists one matter and that all is, therefore, in all, affords an initial dynamism to fire implicitly in his two examples of the principle, yet, ends by admitting that, even if there is the right assortment of atoms in each type of creature to form one of another type, 'il nous manque un Prométhée pour faire cet extract'.<sup>34</sup> Dyrcona, on entering earthly paradise, had felt that same delightful pain which, he imagines, the embryo experiences at the moment when it is infused with its soul: 'je sentis ma jeunesse se rallumer, mon visage devenir vermeil, ma chaleur naturelle se remesler doucement à mon humide radical, enfin je reculois sur mon âge environ quatorze ans'.<sup>35</sup> Is life an extension backwards of this observed process? In the Soleil, there is no such variation in ideas, and no questioning of the fact that fire is the source of all life just as it is that of all natural

33. A.M., p. 125: 'le Soleil, cette grande âme du Monde'.

34. A.M., p. 52 (mss version); cf. vt. f.

35. A.M., p. 22.

phenomena, however seemingly wondrous. For, all souls are fiery and all derive from the world-soul, or sun, which is comprized of the purest, that is, the most fiery part of the souls of the dead of the surrounding worlds supported by that sun:

Ce Monde-cy n'est formé d'autre chose que des Esprits de tout ce qui meurt dans les orbes d'autour, comme sont Mercure, Vénus, la Terre, Mars, Jupiter et Saturne.

Ainsi, dès qu'une Plante, une Beste ou un Homme expirent, leurs âmes montent, sans s'éteindre, à sa sphère, de mesme que vous voyez la flamme d'une chandelle y voler en pointe, malgré le suif qui la tient par les pieds. Or toutes ces âmes unies qu'elles sont à la source du jour, et purgées de la grosse matière qui les empeschoit, elles exercent des fonctions bien plus nobles que celles de croistre, de sentir et de raisonner; car elles sont employées à former le sang et les esprits vitaux du Soleil, ce grand et parfait animal: Et c'est pourquoy vous ne devez point douter que le Soleil n'opère de l'esprit bien plus parfaitement que vous, puis que c'est par la chaleur d'un million de ces âmes rectifiées, dont la sienne est un élixir, qu'il connoist le secret de la vie, qu'il influë à la matière de vos Mondes la puissance d'engendrer, qu'il rend des corps capables de se sentir estre, et enfin qu'il se fait voir et fait voir toutes choses. 36

Towards the end of the story of the Arbres amants, the oak of Dodona's grove had explained how the fiery particles are circulated through every world in the universe, without ceasing, by means of the poles:

Les Poles sont les bouches du Ciel par lesquelles il reprend la lumière, la chaleur et les influences qu'il a répandues sur la Terre;

autrement, si tous les trésors du Soleil ne remontoient à leur source, il y auroit longtemps (toute sa clarté n'estant qu'une poussière d'atomes enflammés qui se détachent de son globe) qu'elle seroit éteinte et qu'il ne luiroit plus, ou que cette abondance de petits corps ignés qui s'amoncèlent sur la Terre pour n'en plus sortir l'auroient déjà consommée.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, if fire is the cause of movement and of life, its source, too, needs to be replenished: all in the universe is in flux, and is only momentarily 'fixed' by such matter as cold or humidity, the very stability of that universe being dependent on its non-static constant; yet, conversely, the source of that flux, fire, must itself circulate, in order to be able to continue to enliven. Ultimately, then, the infrastructure of Cyrano's vision of the universe is the notion of movement, rather than of fire.

If fire seems to be all-important, this is rather on account of the values it represents. All the ideas we have so far encountered are developed as a harmonious whole in the Soleil, and the notion of the sun as a wondrous, but natural, realm, the seat of the secret of life and of Truth, where all may happen, and does, is consciously maintained from the moment that Dyrcona is approaching the sun-spot to the end of the narrative. That all occurs according to the same physical laws as on earth and on the moon is crucial: for the whole universe is one; but that these events should take on another, superior dimension, is certainly equally so.

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37. A.M., p. 175.

a/ As Dyrcona comes into the sun's atmosphere, first journeying to the sun-spot and then to the sun itself, he needs no sustenance nor sleep. He feels lighter in weight and in hue, and with this, joyous in disposition; his machine has become completely transparent, and he, diaphanous. His sense perceptions remain fully operative - he can feel himself, see his internal organs, watch the circulation of his blood. Prior to landing on the sun-spot, he discovers that, aided by the power of his desiring it, he can fly without his machine; once landed on the sun, he bounces rather than walks along, owing to his decreased weight. How do all these extraordinary transformations occur?

Dyrcona surmises that, in these fiery regions, radical cold and heat are but variants of the same fire; it is this fire which repairs his body instead of food and sleep, and it is this which causes his decreased weight and density. He bounces along because the sun, comprized entirely of fiery particles, is a region of weightlessness.<sup>38</sup> Cyrano does not spell out the reason for the lack of a centre to the sun, and thus, of weight, but the explanation that I have just suggested would seem to follow from the assumptions that he makes throughout the Autre Monde, and, in particular, as Dyrcona approaches the sun regions, about fire and 'matter'. Fire is light in both senses of the word - 'léger' and 'lumineux'; it expresses itself as heat and light, it produces happiness, is life-giving and life maintaining, and all this is good.

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38. A.M., pp. 125-6 and 133-8.

Its effect is to render less material, to afford youth, health, and purity. Moral evaluation is an integral part of this physical account. Thus, matter, by contrast, is dense, dark, and heavy; but, at this point, Cyrano departs from his neoplatonic model, for he does not go on to assume, like his sixteenth-century Italian predecessors - Campanella, Vanini, and before them, Telesio and Bruno - that matter, as privation of being, is evil.

If some of these concepts seem to run counter to the monism of the Lune, which persists in the Soleil as the sun-inhabitants' metamorphoses bear witness, is this not because Cyrano has adopted more or less piecemeal a physical system precisely on account of the system of values which go hand in hand with it? The rejection of one side of that system tends to support this surmise, for it is not the neoplatonic philosophy that is of interest so much as the means it affords to express the belief that nature - or life - is in itself good; hence, the rejection, or glossing over, of the reverse side to the theory.<sup>39</sup> Throughout the adventures of Dyrcona on the sun, Cyrano is anxious to emphasize the spiritual value of fire, but never admits to an actual spiritual substance; similarly, in describing the central position of the sun, at the beginning of the Lune, he had used a phrase to portray it, namely 'ce Dieu visible', which, according to Copernicus, was traditionally employed of the

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39. This question is dealt with in terms of its moral implications for the individual and society in chapter VI below.

heavens, but, by Trismegistus, of the sun.<sup>40</sup>

In the Soleil, Cyrano speaks of fire as 'cette poussière quasi spirituelle'; it is not the fire of the sun which burns, but 'la matière où il est attaché', for, 'le feu du Soleil ne peut estre meslé d'aucune matière'. As Dyrcona nears the sun-spot, he muses on the disappearance on our earth of daemons, and the possibility that angels once lived there also; for, perhaps our earth was once a sun, which, when it became extinct, these creatures vacated, to live on the globe known to us as the sun, 'sçachant que Dieu avoit posé son Trône dans le Soleil'.<sup>41</sup> Just as the idea that the sun's heat derives from a non-material fire has to do with a non-physical concept of it, and just as the notion that the sun has no centre is representative of a system of values and not of an astronomical fact, so the description of the sun itself as the seat of the divinity is not, as in its probable source - Campanella's Città,<sup>42</sup> a metaphysical metaphor, but rather, a moral one. Just as when, in the moon, fire is described as the 'constructor of everything in the universe', and when the soul is referred to obliquely as 'a fire which moves itself', so the 'almost spiritual' fire, free of matter, which is the sun, takes the place of the orthodox unmoved mover, or, a 'visible God', of the divinity Himself. This inference is borne out when Dyrcona manages to

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40. Copernicus, op. cit., p. 116; A.M., p. 14.

41. A.M., p. 126; A.M., p. 128.

42. See in French edition, La Cité du soleil, Paris, 1950, p. 98; 'le grand prêtre, c'est le soleil lui-même'.



fly on his own, for, he says, he turns his eyes to the sun, 'nostre Père commun'; later, he hears 'Campanella' refer to the fact that 'le Soleil est vostre Père, et ... l'Autheur de toutes choses'.<sup>43</sup> Thus, it is clear that Cyrano consistently uses religious concepts and spiritual terminology, borrowed - to judge from the context of such usage - from writers like Campanella, possibly Bruno and Vanini, and from Cardano, the last named specifically mentioned at the beginning of the Lune,<sup>44</sup> all theists in some sense or other (even Vanini), and places them in an a-theist vision of the universe.

Thus, the apparent contradictions between these passages and the pronouncements of characters like the daemon or the Spaniard, Gonzales, originate in assessing the two outside their immediate context. When Cyrano dispenses with the theistic context of his predecessors, while adopting their scheme of values, does he not do so in order to represent something other than the physical or the metaphysical? Similarly, perhaps his monism, like his concept of fire, is but a symbol? Are these, in the last analysis, any more real as physical concepts than the notions of sympathy and antipathy, which creep into his explanations at every turn, without ever being explained? Indeed, his use of these seems to emulate the daemon's stock human being who uses such ideas to talk about that of which he has no understanding, owing to

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43. A.M., pp. 76, 78, 126; 135, 186.

44. A.M., p. 6.

his sad lack of the necessary senses. Is not the manner in which Cyrano expresses his physical theories just as crucial to an understanding of their role in the novels, as are the theories themselves? An examination, firstly, of one episode generally regarded as abstruse, not to say contradictory, and then of the manner in which the main episodes are presented to the reader, may help to elucidate this.

Of all the anomalies in the Autre Monde, the most telling, perhaps, is contained in the theory of matter of the Spaniard. For, his exposition consists in two conversations, the second of which is in many respects in direct contradiction with the first. In the first account, he presupposes that there exists only one element in the universe, and that earth, fire, air, and water are but expressions of this single substance. Between the particles of this matter, he asserts, there is a void.<sup>45</sup> In the second, by contrast, he conceives of the four elements as being distinct from each other, and the apparent space between particles, such as the grains of sand of which earth is composed, as consisting of air. If all is in all, this does not mean that all is of the same constituents.<sup>46</sup>

At least one critic has discussed this paradox in some detail: Madeleine Alcover concludes her chapter on the ideas of the Spaniard in the following manner:

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45. A.M., pp. 45-8.

46. A.M., pp. 48-52.

Ce passage des Estats de la Lune est celui qui a été le moins commenté: l'inconséquence de Gonzalès et le style extrêmement métaphorique de ses exposés en sont peut-être la cause. Il est un des rares interlocuteurs de l'Autre Monde à se contredire. Mais se contredit-il vraiment? Gonzalès ne soutient pas en même temps qu'il n'y a qu'un élément et qu'il y en a quatre, qu'il y a du vide et qu'il n'y en a pas, mais il présente d'abord un système, puis un autre totalement opposé. Il semble faire un exercice qui consiste à soutenir le pour, puis le contre; .... Cyrano se divertit; il précise bien qu'ils s'amusaient à passer le temps et le jugement qu'il porte à la fin sur Gonzalès est qu'il 'avoit l'esprit joly'. Le style métaphorique de l'Espagnol ne contredit pas le jugement de Cyrano et le rôle de l'imagination, dans ces entretiens, est souligné dès le début. Dans les Estats de la Lune, ces pages font exception. Les autres 'théoriciens' s'exprimeront dans un style beaucoup plus sobre. On peut se demander si l'auteur n'a pas fait une satire du style d'outre-mont.<sup>47</sup>

The contention that each half of the Spaniard's conversation constitutes a distinct system seems wholly justified by the text, but is it an adequate explanation to infer from this that Cyrano is merely playing a rhetorical game? If so, could one not argue that, by analogy with this, the whole of the Autre Monde is similarly nothing but a diversion, for, throughout, and especially is this so in the Lune, dialogue is a favoured means of expounding ideas and concepts. Throughout, also, one system stands in juxtaposition to another, each a viable account of reality, and, in this, not only often contradicting details in the exposition of an alternative system, but also rendering that alternative account seemingly redundant. On the basis of this argument, the Gonzales episode differs in degree, not kind, from the rest of the story,

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47. Op. cit., p. 45.

its paradox being neater because diametrical. Again, if this episode is described in a language more 'metaphorical' than that of the rest of the Lune, is there not some substantial reason for this? Is it the void - anti-void debate, or the one element - four elements contradiction, that is the substance of the physical theories described, or are they not the outer trappings - glaringly and willingly contrived, which point to a much profounder notion of contradiction as part and parcel of existence itself?

In the first part of his exposition, the Spaniard purports to wish to prove that there exists a vacuum in Nature, and that all matter is of the same weight; in the second, that all is in all. In introducing his case, then, there is no similarity or symmetry between the first and the second versions, but in simultaneously pointing out that the former contention caused him to be accused before the Inquisition by the pedants in his country, and that the latter one runs counter to the Aristotelian beliefs - regarded by him as pedantic - of all classes of Dyrcona's compatriots, Gonzales displays one and the same attitude: his contempt for the pedant, whom he identifies with authority. The two parts of his exegesis cohere, therefore, on the level of satire.<sup>48</sup>

In terms of their physical import, each of the two passages are similar also, in that they describe how variety can stem from one prime matter, or, in other words, how change

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48. A.M., pp. 45; 49.

can be accounted for by a single principle. It is only when we examine his means of expression, however, that the nature of the physical principle at work in each theory becomes clear. In the first theory, change occurs as a result of the sympathy that exists between one state of matter and another: like attracts like, despite the apparent differences between earth, fire, air, and water. Matter plays various roles, but seeks always to assimilate itself to the nature of the matter with which it comes into contact. In his main argument, the idea of sympathy, harmony, and homogeneity are the dominants, as the parts of the following quotation from it which I have italicized will demonstrate:

Quand, par exemple, vous regardés du feu, ce n'est pas du feu, ce n'est rien que de l'air beaucoup estendu, l'air n'est que de l'eau fort dilatée, l'eau n'est que de la terre qui se fond et la terre elle-mesme n'est autre chose que de l'eau beaucoup resserrée, et ainsy à pénétrer sérieusement la matière, vous trouverez qu'elle n'est qu'une, qui comme une excellente comédienne joue icy bas toutes sortes de personnages sous toutes sortes d'habits; autrement, il faudroit admettre autant d'éléments qu'il y a de sortes de corps; et si vous me demandés pourquoy donc le feu brusle et l'eau refroidit, veu que ce n'est qu'une mesme matière, je vous réponds que cette matière agit par sympathie, selon la disposition où elle se trouve dans le temps qu'elle agit. Le feu, qui n'est rien que de la terre encore plus respanduë qu'elle ne l'est pour constituer l'air, tasche à changer en elle, par sympathie, ce qu'elle rencontre; ainsy, la chaleur du charbon, estant le feu le plus subtil et le plus propre à pénétrer un corps, se glisse entre les pores de nostre masse, nous faict dilater au commencement, parce que c'est une nouvelle matière qui nous remplit et nous faict exaler en sueur; cette sueur, estenduë par le feu, se convertit en fumée et devient air; cet air, encore davantage fondu par la chaleur de l'anti-péristase ou des astres qui l'avoisinent,

s'appelle feu, et la terre abandonnée par le froid et par l'humide qui lioient toutes nos parties tombe en terre; l'eau, d'autre part, quoy qu'elle ne diffère de la matiere qu'en ce qu'elle est plus serrée, ne nous brusle pas, à cause qu'estant serrée, elle demande par sympathie à resserrer les corps qu'elle rencontre, et le froid que nous sentons n'est autre chose que l'effect de nostre chair qui se replie sur elle-mesme par le voisinage de la terre ou de l'eau qui la contrainct de luy ressembler. De là vient que les hidropiques, remplis d'eau, changent en eau toute la nourriture qu'ilz prennent; de là vient que les bilieux changent en bile tout le sang que forme leur foye. Supposés donc qu'il n'y ayst qu'un seul élément, il est certissime que tous les corps, chacun selon sa quantité [1657: qualité], inclinent esgallement au centre de la terre.' 49

The only penetrative fire mentioned 'slips' rather than pierces; the only constraint is to resemble. All inclines in like manner and in like propensity towards the centre of the earth, since all matter is tending to union. If Gonzales presupposes a void between particles of matter, this is obligatory in order to allow of change; without it, all having united, no further movement could take place. The difficulty in this system lies in accounting for the conflict, or penetration of one type of body by another: While he does go on to use a military image to describe it - of being wounded by a pike, sword, or dagger - Cyrano manages to do so without upsetting his main theory, for, argues his Spaniard, that void, which undoubtedly plays a part by allowing of the compression of our flesh on the impact of the weapon, consists in 'privation of being', or 'nothing' ('rien'). Similarly, if a lump of earth appears to condense into a stone by a process of inter-

penetration of its grains of matter, this is not, in fact, the case, for 'les corps ne se pénètrent point: mais il fault que cette matière se soit rapprochée et, si vous voulés, racourcie en remplissant le vuide de sa maison.'<sup>50</sup>

Juppont admitted to perplexity, faced with the complex personification which serves to describe the second theory: 'Nous sommes forcément réduits à des conjectures sur le fond de la pensée de Cyrano. Comment interpréter "le secours de l'étranger"? ... qu'entend-il par "le champ qu'occupait son ennemi"? qu'est-ce que le "triomphe du feu sur son geolier"?'<sup>51</sup> Yet, had he examined the whole passage in more detail, would he not have remarked that throughout this second conversation Cyrano pursues an image which characterizes conflict, that is, antipathy? The puzzlement is explained away by the very metaphors which were the source of it.

From the beginning of the second account the Spaniard follows the style, order, and terminology of his first one, while expressing the opposite: if, in the first, fire is another form of air, and air of earth,<sup>and</sup> earth, in its turn, of water, in the second, the presence of fish in water proves that there exists 'salt and fire' in the expanse of water; that there is water in fire is witnessed to by the behaviour of comets, for, without it, they would be consumed immediately, consisting as they do of an essentially fiery nature. He accounts for the eruptions of Sicilian mountains by supposing that earth is interspersed with air - he sees no reason to believe the

50. A.M., pp. 47-8.

51. Cf. A.M., p. 51, n. 1.

interstices to be comprized of void; that there is earth in air is easily observed 'autant de fois que vous voyez battre sur vos testés ces légions d'atomes, si nombreuses qu'elles en estouffent l'Arithmétique.' (These are, presumably, the hailstones which rain down from the erupting volcano). Each element finds a resting place in another, but is distinct from it all the while. If comets contain within them humidity as well as fire, these two opposed elements do battle with each other, and it is this very conflict which assures the continued existence of the host:

Car qu'ilz choisissent le feu, mesme le plus destaché de la matière, comme les Comettes, il y en a tousjours et beaucoup, puisque si cette humeur onctueuse dont ilz sont engendrez, réduite en soulfre par la chaleur de l'antipéristase qui les allume, ne trouvoit un obstacle à sa violence dans l'humide froideur qui la tempère et la combat, elle se consumerait brusquement comme un éclair.

In imputing the interstices between particles of matter to air, not void, Gonzales uses exactly the same phrase to describe that matter as he had done in his first conversation, where he had imputed to that space 'void' or 'privation of being', namely, 'grains de sablon'.<sup>52</sup>

It is in the latter part of the second account, which corresponds to the theme of penetration by wounding of the flesh in the first, that Cyrano resorts to a seemingly - and avowedly - complex set of images personifying fire, and cold and humidity; instead of entertaining the notion of

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52. A.M., p. 50, cf. p.48.



change through penetration, here he considers it as it occurs in the various stages of burning a log. The main part of the passage reads as follows:

Prenés, je vous prie, une busche, ou quelque autre matière combustible, et mettés-y le feu; ilz diront, eux, quand elle sera embrasée que ce qui estoit bois est devenu feu; mais je leur soustiens que non, moy, et qu'il n'y a point davantage de feu, maintenant qu'elle est toute en flammes, que tantost auparavant qu'on en eust approché l'allumette; mais celuy qui estoit caché dans la busche, que le froid et l'humide empeschoient de s'estendre et d'agir, secouru par l'estranger, a rallié ses forces contre le flegme qui l'estouffoit, et s'est emparé du champ qu'occupoit son ennemy: aussy se montre-t-il sans obstacle et triomphant de son geollier. Ne voyés-vous pas comme l'eau s'enfuit par les deux bouts du tronçon, chaude et fumante encore du combat qu'elle a rendu? Cette flamme que vous voyés en hault est le feu le plus subtil, le plus desgagé de la matière et le plus tost prest, par conséquent, à retourner chez soy; il s'unit pourtant en pyramide jusques à certaine hauteur pour enfoncer l'espaisse humidité de l'air qui luy résiste; mais comme il vient, en montant, à se desgager peu à peu de la violente compagnie de ses hostes, alors il prend le large, parce qu'il ne rencontre plus rien d'antipatique à son passage, et cette négligence est bien souvent la cause d'une seconde prison; car luy qui chemine séparé, s'esgarera quelquefois dans un nuage s'il s'y rencontre d'autres feux en assés grand nombre pour faire teste à la vapeur, ilz se joignent, ilz grondent, ilz tonnent, ilz fouldroient et la mort des innocens est bien souvent l'effect de la cholère animée des choses mortes. Si quand il se trouve embarrassé dans ces cruditez importunes de la moyenne région il n'est pas assez fort pour se deffendre, il s'abandonne à la

discrétion de la nuë qui, contraincte par sa pesanteur de retomber en terre, y mène son prisonnier avec elle, et ce malheureux, enfermé dans une goutte d'eau, se rencontrera peut-estre au pied d'un chesne, de qui le feu animal invitera ce pauvre esgaré de se loger avec luy; ainsy le voilà recouvrant les mesme sort dont il estoit party quelques jours auparavant.<sup>53</sup>

The phrases which I have italicized contain the most obvious use of the idea of military combat, in the wider context of the two enemies fighting each other, the one causing the other, at least temporarily, to become imprisoned, if not to surrender. Here, two sources of fire and two of humidity exist, the one in the log, and the other in the atmosphere outside of its bounds; both types of fire do battle with both types of humidity. As in the example of the comet preceding this passage, and as in the episode, in the sun, of the battle of the remora and the salamander, fire finds an enemy in humidity, or cold, powerful enough to stay its course; if it does not kill it, as the remora manages to do, humidity does imprison both the fire in the log and that in the air ('l'estranger'), though, united, the two fiery forces do momentarily triumph (the gaoler being phlegm or humidity). Just as Cyrano conceives of worlds in worlds on a cosmic scale, so, here, he develops his central theme by imagining analogous battles within battles; thus, having escaped the imprisonment in the log, the fire originally contained in it, now united with the

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53. A.M., pp. 50-1. The use of military images to express the idea of penetration, on the one hand, or of antipathy, on the other, is not restricted to the Gonzales episode; cf. also, A.M., p. 81 ('tout ainsy que l'escarre .... d'un carreau d'acier'); p. 72 ('Ce ciron qui la produit .... le massacre et la faim').

fire in the atmosphere, flames upwards (the pyramid), only to encounter more humidity in the form of cloud - the combat is renewed, on a larger battlefield. Eventually, in the middle region, where the cloud is extensive, the fire is enveloped and brought back to earth enclosed in a raindrop. Antipathy has been envisaged as the medium of cyclical change: all is in all precisely because the whole incorporates disparate elements. There is no need of void, nor of an outside agent. In the earlier conversation, where attraction is responsible for change, and, therefore, of variety in a similar whole, Cyrano manages to make the concept work, here too, without a truly external agent, by conceiving of his void as 'nothing'. As we have already discovered in examining his concept of fire, Cyrano inherits the neo-platonic notion of being, where matter is considered to be a non-perfect non est, but uses it quite out of its original context: his notion of void in the first conversation of the Spaniard is equally non-factual, and not viable if understood on a purely physical basis. But, it is highly doubtful whether this episode was ever meant to be taken literally. Again, if we find some difficulty in deciphering the extended image in the passage just quoted, it is highly unlikely that Cyrano's contemporaries would have reacted in this way: for, the idea of a conflict between heat and cold as the basis of all those changes that are the manifestation of death and of life is a common-place; the use of the word 'phlegm' is a clue here to all those connotations which the philosophical concept was put to in everyday life, with the theory of the humours and

its bearing on every aspect of the individual's affective life, as of his chances of recovery in sickness, or his supposed propensity to health.

Thus, Mme Alcover is quite correct in emphasizing the parallelism between the two accounts, and the fact that each represents an autonomous system. However, in Cyrano's universe, as we know it from the rest of his work, both sets of argument are necessary, the one concept represented - sympathy - being viable as a cause of change, and, indeed, of life itself, only when accompanied by its counterpart - antipathy. In this, the mode of presentation of each conversation of the Spaniard exemplifies the wider principle exemplified, in its turn, in the episode as a whole; so, stylistically, we have worlds in worlds, just as that style represents physical worlds in worlds. In this sense, as in that which I have intimated in italicizing the appropriate terms in the body of the two passages, the style is quite as important in the expression of the idea as is the content it expresses. The two work in harmony, each feeding and complementing the other. If, as I have contended earlier, Cyrano's physics is no less metaphorical than the linguistic images which represent it, is it not equally true that those metaphors are part and parcel of his physical theories?

This is borne out in the Arbres amants episode and the battle of the remora and salamander in the Soleil, the counterparts in that novel of the two concepts - of sympathy

and antipathy - portrayed in the Gonzales episode of the Lune. In these, too, Cyrano relies on personification to convince; this is understandable, for, how else can one justify for 'prove' the existence of such forces in the universe? If the magnet is a favourite topic in the seventeenth century, as in those preceding it, is this not <sup>still</sup> just as much on account of its attractive qualities <sup>per se,</sup> as of any laws one might be able to deduce by observing its effect on the iron? For, it was its very apparent unpredictability that prompted philosophers to try to discover a law governing its behaviour. If the Gonzales episode is, as Dr. Alcover suggests, the most florid in the Lune, is this not for a very good reason: that the subject-matter appears to be the least quantifiable in the universe, and the least easily accountable for in any other terms than its own? The very notion of sympathy is one linked to that of the occult; if Cyrano is fascinated by the magnet, is this not precisely because it lends to a concept, by its nature non-verifiable, the credence of all natural phenomena: even if he cannot account for the behaviour of the magnet in verifiable terms, the fact that the magnet does behave in certain predictable ways can be verified by experience. Thus, a concept which is referred to frequently in both novels is explored in an, at once, blatantly allegorical and physical

manner in the Arbres Amants story.<sup>54</sup>

Contradiction plays a positive role in the Autre Monde, then, in the same way that, if the episodes are autonomous as physical systems, they yet contain elements which are in conflict with details of the argument pursued in other episodes. While many of these conflicting elements may be explained away, given a more careful consideration of the context in which they are presented, some are clearly deliberate as is the case in the exegeses of the Spaniard, Gonzales. In this presentation, Cyrano witnesses, stylistically, to his vision of the universe as an unity embracing a multifarious variety. In the Gonzales episode, in particular, the symmetrical treatment afforded the idea of opposites as an explanation of one principle - that all is in all - expresses already a notion of reality, likewise a neoplatonic commonplace, which the daemon will mention towards the end of the Lune, that of the coincidence of contraries, or, the identity of opposites.<sup>55</sup> As I shall endeavour to demonstrate in chapter VIII, this concept is not just an inherited commonplace which goes necessarily hand in hand with

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54. This episode is treated of in detail in Chapter VII below, in the context of the correspondence between Cyrano's modes of expression and his moral philosophy.

It is, perhaps, noteworthy, here, that the story of the battle of the remora and salamander, exemplifying the antipathy between radical cold and fire, follows on the arbres amants episode, thus repeating, in the Soleil, the pattern established in the Gonzales episode, in the Lune.

55. A.M., p. 83.

the theory of the chain of being and <sup>with</sup> the plenitude principle,<sup>56</sup> but forms an integral part of Cyrano's scale of values.

In his so-called physics, then, does Cyrano ever presume to do anything more than to save appearances? Does he, indeed, try to be factual, or is not every one of his theories merely a representation? Though, it is true, his speakers say that they wish to 'prove' their hypotheses, they invariably follow up or precede this contention, usually immediately, with the request that Dyrcona 'imagine', 'suppose', or refer to the 'portrait' or portrayal of Nature that they are providing. In the Lune, only the initial journey of Dyrcona to Canada and to the moon provide 'factual' evidence - for the heliocentric worlds in worlds theory; the Spaniard asks Dyrcona to 'supposer qu'il n'y a qu'un Elément', and it is only subsequent to this that he talks of 'proving' it. The first lunar academician introduces his Cironalité universelle theory with: 'Il me reste à vous prouver ...', but continues immediately with, 'Représentez-vous donc l'Univers comme...'. The second academician, likewise, proposes his atomic theory in this proof - supposition guise, asking Dyrcona to 's'imaginer', saying that he himself 's' imagine', arguing that 'L'opération de l'ouye n'est pas plus mal aisée à concevoir'. His wish to 'prouver que l'odorat et le goust

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56. See A.O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being, Cambridge, Mass., 1942, and my application of this material to the Autre Monde, in Chapters III, VII, and VIII, below.

se fassent aussy par l'entremise de ces mesmes petits corps' is a proof based itself on admitted suppositions. Even the daemon, who states that earth becomes a tree, and a tree, a pig, continues, 'ne pouvons-nous donc pas croire ... qu'ilz aspirent à devenir hommes?' When he had asked the second moon academician for an explanation of vision through a mirror, Dyrcona begs him to tell him how we 'paint' ourselves in it. Here the visual is the most appropriate type of image to employ, but even when discussing hearing, the phenomenon of the transmission of music is referred to as 'le portraict de cette sarabande'.<sup>57</sup>

Why should Cyrano choose to represent, rather than to describe his physical concepts as though they were true? Apart from the obvious explanation that the moon is a fictional world, created by him, is there not, perhaps, a profounder significance in this formal aspect of the narrative? For, the reader takes for granted that all is supposition by the very nature of the story. Surely this does not have to be underlined. The effect of this technique is clear: it is the satire on man's customs and beliefs which takes on the appearance of certainty, for, it is the institutions of the moon-men, and the certain truths which they reveal to Dyrcona which assume the quality of fact, not the physical theories that serve as the basis of the lunarians' habits and opinions. Thus, in the Lune, it is the superiority of lunarians and

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57. A.M., pp. 45, and 47: 'je vais donc vous le prouver'; 71; 76, 79, 81; 90; 79; 80.



Socratic daemon which comes across as a certainty rather than the physical theories they propound. In this way, the moral intent can be built on the physics without being dependent on the veracity of the latter to be persuasive.

In the Soleil, the representational element is extended into lengthy allegories and living emblems; its function differs also from that which it fulfills in the Lune, insofar that here, it is not the theories and stories of what happens on the sun that are conjectural, but the manner in which they are presented. For, the sun is the realm of truth; it is the difficulty of describing perfection that necessitates the use of analogical similes such as allegory and emblem. What Dyrcona witnesses there is Truth. As Dyrcona journeys towards the sun, he conjectures on the reasons for the changes which take place in his body, using phrases such as, 'sans doute', 'Ce n'est pas qu'on ne se puisse imaginer'; 'Or que sçait-on...?', 'peut-estre que...', 'je me figure que'; 'une difficulté peut embarrasser le lecteur', 'Je respons à cela que, sans doute...'.<sup>58</sup> By contrast, the secrets of the realm of truth are presented as fact: historical truths are eternally valid, as the sun-spot man shows; Dyrcona sees the beginnings of the creation of a solar man by Coction; the fact of pure act is acted out by the sun inhabitants, and, again, it is Dyrcona who surmises

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58. A.M., pp. 125, 135; 128; 128; 128; 134; 134; 134-5.

as to the meaning of what he sees - 'il sembloit que le dessein fut de représenter un énorme Géant'; he is absolutely sure that what he thinks he sees is one and the same as what has happened: 'mes yeux toutefois les virent entrer l'un dans l'autre', and the king of the sun inhabitants explains what the process of metamorphosis consists in, for they all form 'une science certaine de ce qui est'. Their king both demonstrates and declaims: 'Mais écoutez, Peuples de la Terre', 'Mais écoute, et je te découvriray comment...'; 'Il faut que tu sçaches'. For Dyrcona, 'il continua sa preuve'.<sup>59</sup>

The oak of Dodona recounting the story of the amorous trees, and 'Campanella', as he guides Dyrcona through the solar regions, both insist that he will 'know' through their instruction; throughout, the oak repeats, 'vous sçaurez donc que'; he requests Dyrcona to 'look', to 'note' ('remarquer'), then to 'consider' and to 'understand'.

'Campanella' tells Dyrcona what he will know and what he should know.<sup>60</sup> Again, Dyrcona sees the fight of the remora and salamander, and is conducted through the three rivers of memory, imagination, and judgement, after having walked by the five streams of the senses. He happens on the philosopher whose head is splitting with an overabundance of images.

Only when Dyrcona discusses with 'Campanella' what he purports

59. A.M., pp. 141; 141; 142; 141; 145; 145.

60. A.M., pp. 167, 172 and 175; 168, 170, 171, 172; 177, 179.

to be Cartesian physics (he assimilates it to Epicureanism), is the idea of saving appearances returned to.<sup>61</sup> Thus, the various styles of presentation delineate quite clearly the function of each episode in the narrative. The allegory of the Soleil has the advantage of being a highly contrived form; thus, the marvellous may be described through it at the same time as the character makes clear that it is fact, either by setting the events into an historical context, or by letting the allegorical be concretized into an event in the present. In the Lune, a globe like our own, the opposite process is at work, the physical serving as a means of expressing non-physical concepts. What these concepts are, and how they are developed in both novels, the Soleil in this being very much a sequel to the Lune, is the subject-matter of the rest of this study.

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61. A.M., pp. 183-4: 'Campanella' says that the principles of Descartes's physics are 'simples et si naturels qu'estant supposez, il n'y en a aucune qui satisfasse plus nécessairement à toutes les apparences'.

CHAPTER IIITHE SCALE OF BEING

As Professor Arthur Lovejoy has demonstrated in his study of The Great Chain of Being, published in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1936, the concept of scale of being stems directly from that of chain, on account of the theistic cadre in which the notion was originally conceived by Plato, and in which it continued to be couched in Western thought from then on, and well into the seventeenth century. Handed down through the Neoplatonists, and in particular, through the work of Plotinus, the doctrine relies on three principles: the other-worldliness of God, the principle of plenitude, inherited from Plato, and the extension of the second of these, formulated by Aristotle, the principle of continuity.

God is perfect and infinite, while all that He has created, finite and lacking perfection, is infinitely distanced from Him. Being self-sufficient, and thus having no need to create, yet being by His nature unenvious and all good, God cannot but have created a universe that reflects His nature; goodness consisting for Plato in full being, the chain represents that fullness, in that all the possible gradations of living creature feature in it, ranging from high perfection to the closest that life can come to imperfection, or non-being. Though the distance between God's perfect nature and its representation in the most perfect creature is infinite, still,

all creatures, from the lowliest to the most estimable, emulate and strive after divine perfection. Thus, the doctrine of the chain of being contains a paradox: all creatures, however imperfect, are necessary to express goodness; a full universe must contain within it privation of being, that is, evil.

The principle of continuity pushes to its limit the notion of plenitude: each link in the chain, or rung on the ladder of creation, shares qualities with the link or rung above and below it, so that no gap exists between the various modes of being. Yet again, a conflict in values is evident, for, each creature is equally necessary in the overall divine purpose, while, at the same time, the very reasoning behind the doctrine of the chain of being presupposes the hierarchical evaluations understood in the idea of scale. As Professor E. Tillyard puts it, 'The chain is also a ladder. The elements are alimantal. There is a progression in the way the elements nourish plants, the fruits of plants beasts, and the flesh of beasts men. And this is all one with the tendency of man upwards towards God. The chain of being is educative both in the marvels of its static self and in its implications of ascent'.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the Autre Monde, Cyrano takes for granted the existence of a chain of being. The categories into which he places living things are invariably the traditionally

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1. Cited in his book entitled The Elizabethan World Picture,  
(Penguin Books), 1963, p. 40. Harmondsworth

accepted ones of the mineral, vegetative, sensitive, and rational, and his rungs on the ladder of creation, stone or earth, plant, beast, man - and, in the exegeses of the Socratic daemon, daemons, the counterpart of the angelic host, who, in the orthodox scale, occupy together the intellectual level.<sup>2</sup> It is highly debatable, however, whether he interprets the theory in the traditional manner.

The scale is distinctly theistic in its terms of reference, enabling, on the one hand, a link between God and His creatures, and, on the other, the fullest expression of God through those creatures. Though neoplatonic in origin, from the schoolmen on the doctrine serves well to underline the Christian notion of a providential God; it, of course, marries with the orthodox astronomy, likewise steaming from Plato through Aristotle and Ptolemy, and goes hand in hand with the micro-macrocosmic correspondence attendant upon that world-system. Despite his rejection of the godhead, as of the enclosed, earth-centred universe, Cyrano never questions the idea of the chain, nor the order of its constituent links. Let us examine, however, the use he makes of that chain in the various instances in which it is directly cited.

At first glance, the daemon's account of the transposition of matter, in the episode prior to the young moon-philosopher's main argument against personal immortality

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2. On the question of the position of daemons on the scale of being, see F. Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, London, 1964, p. 140, and J.S. Spink, 'L'Echelle des êtres et des valeurs dans l'oeuvre de Diderot' in Cahiers de l'Association internationale des études françaises, no. 13 (1961), pp. 339-51.

and resurrection, would seem to correspond closely with the theory of the scale of being just outlined. In the Paris manuscript copy, he proclaims:

Vous sçavez, ô mon filz, que de la terre quand il se fait un arbre, d'un arbre un pourceau, d'un pourceau un homme, ne pouvons-nous donc pas croire, puisque tous les estres en la Nature tendent au plus parfaict, qu'ilz aspirent à devenir homme, cette essence estant l'achèvement du plus beau mixte, et le mieux imaginé qui soit au Monde, estant le seul qui fasse le lien de la vie brutale avec l'angélicque. Que ces métamorphoses arrivent, il faut estre pédant pour le nier: Ne voyons-nous pas qu'un Pommier par la chaleur de son germe comme par une bouche, succe et digère le gazon qui l'environne; qu'un pourceau dévore ce fruict et le fait devenir une partie de soy-mesme? et qu'un homme mangeant le pourceau reschauffe cette chair morte, la joint à soy, et fait enfin revivre cet animal sous une plus noble espèce? Ainsy ce Grand Pontife que vous voyez la mitre sur la teste estoit, il n'y a que soixante ans, une touffe d'herbe en mon jardin. Dieu donc, estant le Père commun de toutes ses créatures, quand il les ayeroit toutes également, n'est-il pas bien croyable qu'après que, par cette métempsicose plus raisonnée que la Pitagoricque, tout ce qui sent, tout ce qui végète enfin, après que toute la matière aura passé par l'homme, alors ce grand jour du Jugement arrivera où font aboutir les Prophètes les secrets de leur Philosophie?<sup>3</sup>

Apart from some variants which appear to be scribal readings, the Munich manuscript version is basically the same as the Paris one.<sup>4</sup> The 1657 text, by contrast, substitutes

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3. A.M., pp. 90-91; P, fos. 138<sup>r</sup>-139<sup>r</sup>.

4. The following variants would seem likely to be the result of scribal error: 'l'acheminement' for 'l'achèvement'; 'mistere' for 'mixte'; 'l'Evangelique' for 'l'angélicque'. In common with the 1657 version, M has 'animale' instead of 'brutale', and 'Prunier' instead of 'Pommier'.

'raisonnable' for 'angélicque', as well as, like the Munich manuscript, having 'animale' for 'brutale'. In the last third of the quoted passage, the revision of the first edition is substantial; it reads as follows:

Ainsi cet homme que vous voyez estoit peut-estre il y a soixante ans une touffe d'herbe dans mon jardin, ce qui est d'autant plus probable que l'opinion de la Metempsicose Pythagorique, soustenuë par tant de grands hommes, n'est vraysemblablement parvenuë jusques à nous, qu'afin de nous engager à en rechercher la verité: comme en effet

↳ nous avons trouvé que tout ce qui est sent et vegete, et qu'enfin apres que toute la matiere est parvenuë à ce periode qui est sa perfection, elle descend et retourne dans son inanité pour revenir et jouer derechef les mesmes rolles. (1657 text, pp. 177-8)

According to the versions of the manuscript copies, there exists a natural striving in all creatures to progress up the scale of being and this derives from their aspiration after perfection. God sits in judgement over His created work, playing the role of a providential power encompassing all the rungs on the ladder of creation. Man assumes his traditionally accepted role of link between the purely material and the spiritual realms, placed as he is between beast and angelic host. Yet, serious anomalies are discernible between this text alone and the orthodox theory notwithstanding: for, the most striking feature of this passage is that the ultimate perfection after which the purely material living-beings, earth, tree, and beast, aspire, is not God, but man; the 'angelic' level represents the ability to reason, as is borne out by the context, and by the variants of M and of the 1657 edition.



The wholly spiritual dimension has been removed from the chain, and the 'angelic' or rational, just as the beast-like, or for that matter, the vegetative, is envisaged as an expression of the particular atomic formation of the creature thus described. It is quite clear that 'le lien de la vie brutale avec l'angélique', which only man represents in Nature, corresponds to 'l'achèvement du plus beau mixte'.

While we cannot prove conclusively Cyrano's responsibility for the revisions of the 1657 text, in this case they do confirm our reading of the manuscript versions. Here, the religious satire has been deleted, and together with it, all theistic connotations. With the substitution of 'raisonnable' for 'angélique', man's position becomes unequivocally that of 'le seul qui fasse le lien de la vie animale avec la raisonnable': the fact that it was the intellectual attribute of the angelic host which is uppermost in Cyrano's mind, and not the spiritual dimension which that intellectuality represents in the Christian use of the traditional scale, is now clearly apparent. The scale has been truncated, with man now serving as the uppermost rung on the ladder; it has also been de-spiritualized, since there is no longer any intervention by, or emulation of, a divinity, and since, as the reader has already learnt from the Socratic daemon, all in the universe is material.

At this first encounter with the daemon, it is true, Dyrcona had also been led to believe that daemons (not men), occupy the top rung of the ladder of creation: they are rarer than men, 'à cause des difficultez qui se rencontrent à la

génération d'un composé si parfait'.<sup>5</sup> There appears to be a shift, then, from this passage to the later one, in that in the earlier account the daemons retain their traditional place side by side with the angels, while in the later one all the emphasis is placed on man, and not <sup>on</sup> the angelic level. Yet, the daemon's expansion of his theory, with his emphasis on the corporality of all living things, demonstrates a unity of intent in the use of the concept of scale or chain of being, in both passages, and it is a unity which is reflected in the ideas of the Autre Monde as a whole.

The perfection which these two species' ascendancy on the scale represents is a material one; daemon and man respectively are envisaged by the animals as that after which they aspire because, corporeally, the daemon, and man, are most perfectly constructed; in other words, the particular combination of atoms which constitutes their organism, and defines their species, is reckoned to be superior to that of each type of creature lower on the ladder. The Socratic daemon stresses that it is by virtue of his sense perceptions, superior in intensity and range, that he occupies a higher position in the scale than man; he later explicitly states that men are aspired after on purely material grounds.

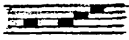

It is now quite clear that the traditional set of values have disappeared: similar terminology does not express a similar concept. For, once the spiritual world is eliminated,

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5. A.M., p. 37.

that is, that world traditionally placed above the material, the whole meaning of the scale is radically altered. Man no longer serves as a bridge between two disparate worlds, but, apart from daemons, as the most perfect example of a single reality, the atomically formed, material, and infinite, universe. Given the truncation of the old scale, all the criteria and value-judgements that pertained to it are called into question. How indeed could the hierarchical aspect of the doctrine of the chain of being continue to obtain in an universe such as that which we have just surveyed in the previous chapter?

Cyrano's reference to the orthodox idea of man, as a link between animal and rational world is, therefore, highly misleading; for him, both are but the various expressions of one and the same ethereal fire, as is made evident in another episode of the Lune, that of the atomic formation of organisms, in which the second moon academician describes the automatic nature of the conjoining of atoms and of the consequent formation of living beings:

Quand la grande rivière de  faict moudre un moulin, conduit les ressorts d'une horloge, et que le petit ruisseau de  ne faict que couler et se desborder quelquefois, vous ne dirés pas que cette rivière ayt bien de l'esprit, parce que vous sçavés qu'elle a rencontré les choses disposées à faire tous ces beaux chefs-d'oeuvre; car si un moulin ne se fut point trouvé dans son cours, elle n'auroit pas pulvérisé le froment; si elle n'eust point rencontré d'horloge, elle n'eust point marqué les heures; et si le petit ruisseau dont j'ay parlé avoit eu les mesmes rencontres, il auroit faict les mesmes miracles. Il en va tout ainsy de ce feu qui se meut de soy-mesme, car ayant trouvé les organes propres à l'agitation nécessaire pour raisonner, il a raisonné; quand il en a trouvé de propres à

à sentir seulement, il a senti; quand il en a trouvé de propres à végéter, il a végété: et qu'ainsy ne soit, qu'on crève les yeux de cet homme que ce feu ou cette Ame faict veoir, il cessera de veoir, de mesme que nostre grande rivièrre ne marquera plus les heures si l'on abat l'Horloge.<sup>6</sup>

It is not the nature of a preexisting soul that determines the category of the creature it informs, but the mixture of atoms of which the creature is de facto composed; the 'soul' is the same constant factor in all manifestations of life, and variations are to be explained by the different organs in which it is active.

All the emphasis in the moon academician's theory is placed on the random nature of atomic 'création' of organisms, yet, this does not preclude the idea, albeit a primitive and post hoc one, of an universal and limitative natural law. In this, the academician's explanations concur with the daemon's notion of a scale of being. The 'law' could be formulated thus: The species of any creature is determined by the quantity and proportion of the various types of atom of which it is comprized; the more complex the structure, the more elevated the species. Thus, the academician explains to Dyrcona:

Or le feu .... a poussé et ramassé dans un Chesne la quantité des figures nécessaires à composer ce Chesne. Mais, me dirés-vous, comment le hazard peut-il avoir assemblé en un lieu toutes les choses qui estoient nécessaires à produire ce Chesne? Je responds que ce n'est

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6. A.M., p. 78. The last phrase is clearer in the 1657 edition, viz. 'de mesme que nostre grande Horloge cessera de marquer les heures, si l'on en brise le mouvement'.

pas merveille que la Matière ainsy disposée n'eust pas formé un Chesne, mais que la merveille eust esté bien grande si la Matière ainsy disposée, le Chesne n'eust pas esté formé; un peu moins de certaines figures, c'eust esté un Orme, un Peuplier, un Saule, un Sureau, de la Bruyère, de la Mousse; un peu plus de certaines autres figures, c'eust esté la plante sensitive, une Huistre à l'escaille, un Ver, une Mouche, une Grenouille, un Moineau, un Singe, un Homme. Quand ayant jetté trois dez sur une table, il arrive ou raffe de deux, ou bien trois, quatre ou cinq, ou bien deux six et un, dirés-vous: 'O le grand Miracle! à chaque dé il est arrivé mesme point, tant d'autres points pouvant arriver; Ô le grand Miracle! il est arrivé en trois dez trois points qui se suivent; Ô le grand Miracle! il est arrivé justement deux six, et le dessous de l'autre six!' Je suis très asseuré qu'estant homme d'esprit vous ne ferés point ces exclamations; car puisqu'il n'y a sur les dez qu'une certaine quantité de nombres, il est impossible qu'il n'en arrive quelqu'un.

Apparently similar to the problems posed by the Chevalier de Méré to Pascal, which resulted in the formulation of the laws of probability, the example which Cyrano chooses, of the occurrence of certain formations of the dice in a game of chance, is here made use of in a way that runs quite counter to the intent of Méré - to discover the degree of possibility of a given result in an unfinished game, and to the theory of Pascal - which does manage to elucidate a mathematical set of laws out of what appears to be purely random. Cyrano's very intent in this passage is to demonstrate the lack of control which the human being, or for that matter, any other creature, has over his, or any organism's formation. The point that he is making approximates to that of say, Tom Stoppard in his play Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and in this aspect confronts the theory of practice with the practice of chance: it could

happen that a coin fall consistently on one face, however unlikely such an event might be.

The reason for the small number of the most complex creatures is precisely the difficulty attached to the agglomeration of the right number and proportion of atoms necessary to make up such a creature, at a given point in time; the process is automatic and natural, however, so that man plays no part in it, and may take no credit for his so-called 'perfection'. The moon academician continues his argument in this vein:

*qu'un*  
 Vous vous estonnés comme cette matière, broûillée pesle-mesle au gré du hazard, peut avoir constitué un homme, veu qu'il y avoit tant de choses nécessaires à la construction de son estre? Mais vous ne scavés pas que cent million de fois cette Matière, s'acheminant au dessein d'un homme, s'est arrestée à former tantost une pierre, tantost du plomb, tantost du corail, tantost une fleur, tantost une Comète, pour le trop ou le trop peu de certaines figures qu'il falloit ou ne falloit pas à désigner un homme; si bien que ce n'est pas merveille qu'entre une infinie quantité de Matière qui change et se remue incessamment, elle ayst rencontré à faire le peu d'animaux, de végétaux, de minéraux que nous voyons, non plus que ce n'est pas merveille qu'en cent coups de dé il arrive un'rafle.<sup>7</sup>

*le*

Seen from the vantage point of the finished article, we perceive exactly the same pattern concerning longevity and quality of life. The daemon explains that, being superior to man, his race lives longer but numbers less; as we descend the scale, so the creatures occupying each of the rungs of the

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7. A.M., pp. 76-7. (*M: un million*).

ladder become correspondingly greater in number, live shorter lives, and are simpler in their atomic structure; of necessity, the capacity of their souls to apprehend reality, and the manner in which they do so, decreases in richness by the same ratio:

Car, quoy que nostre globe soit très vaste et le vostre petit, quoy que nous ne mourrions qu'après quatre mille ans et vous après un demy-siècle, apprenez tout de mesme qu'il n'y a pas tant de caillous que de terre, ny tant d'insectes que de plantes, ny tant d'animaux que d'insectes, ny tant d'hommes que d'animaux; qu'ainsy, il n'y doibt pas avoir tant de démons que d'hommes, à cause des difficultez qui se rencontrent à la génération d'un composé si parfaict.<sup>8</sup>

There is, then, a correlation between the quality and quantity of any one species, and between these and its place in the natural order, as all these passages quoted demonstrate.

Indeed, the terms 'quality' and 'perfection' would seem to be used deliberately with ambiguity by Cyrano, and to be used in this way to attack the anthropocentric attitudes of men on two fronts, as I shall show more fully in the following chapter: as a creature gracing the topmost rung of the ladder (or, the next to the top, if the daemon is included), man must behave in a manner befitting that superior position - Cyrano maintains, through his lunar and solar characters, that man does not. Yet, since all is in all, and all creatures but a variant manifestation of one prime matter, and one ubiquitous, life-giving force - ethereal fire, man may claim no special case,

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8. A.M., p. 37.

and no privileges on account of his position on the ladder, which, seen from his subjective vantage point, or from that of the rest of the living world, is purely fortuitous. Once again, Cyrano's terminology tends to mislead the reader; 'perfection' has to do with a physical order, not moral worth. The scale of being expresses a numerical correlation, not a moral evaluation. Man is 'plus parfait' and of 'une plus noble espèce' on account of the difficulty and time attached to his formation, and not because of any intrinsic moral or spiritual superiority. In the Soleil, the story of the three 'coctions' and Cyrano's argument regarding the number of months necessary for the hatching out of various kinds of embryo, exemplify the same principle. In all these instances, the area of meaning of 'quality' is physical, not moral; naturalistic, not spiritual.

If we now consider again the first passage cited in this chapter, from the Paris manuscript version, together with the 1657 variants, and examine in closer detail the last two-thirds of it, we shall see that the daemon's argument, though expressing his defence of immortality in a rather different manner from that of the first part of the speech, endorses exactly the same set of values as that introductory part. In the middle section of the passage, in all three versions, the daemon argues that we can observe in our everyday life the progression of creatures up the scale of being, by means of eating: each creature in turn being absorbed into <sup>the</sup> one superior to him on the ladder. This continuous transposition of matter he refers to as 'metempsychosis'. However, the term is not



used within the normally accepted context of a reward and punishment system in the after-life, nor, I would argue, of that of moral superiority. In the two manuscript versions, the difference is made clear in the daemon's reference to 'cette métempsicose plus raisonnée que la Pitagorique'. This version, common to M and P, seems rather to represent the stock theory of an alimantal progression in the chain, thus illustrating an idea already expressed in the first part of the passage: a natural aspiration in all living things to mount the scale. Even when using this theory of metempsychosis as a vehicle for satire, Cyrano ignores its traditional punitive role: if the 'grand Pontife' descends from a humble 'touffe d'herbe', there is nothing exceptional in this, for the daemon has only just explained that all men absorb, in like manner, vegetative and sensitive elements. All men might, likewise, be said to have been once but a clump of grass in a garden. The satire, therefore, consists in the fact that the illustrious Church dignitary is no exception to the universal rule: he, like all men, descends from the humblest of origins.

Whereas the manuscript copies do end with the suggestion of an eventual assimilation of all creatures lower in the scale to man, and of the divine judgement of all creatures taking place at this stage of their development, in the judgement of men, in the 1657 text the levelling inferences of Cyrano's theory of metempsychosis are made quite explicit. For, as in the atomic theory of the formation of organisms, and as in the Gonzales episode, so, in the last sentence of the printed edition, there is a cyclical notion of change, and this,

despite the fact that the idea of progression is retained in the first part of the speech:

Enfin, apres que toute la matiere est parvenue à ce periode qui est sa perfection, elle descend et retourne dans son inanité pour revenir et jouer derechef les memes rolles. (1657 edt., p. 178)

Matter moves up and down the ladder of creation unceasingly, the ladder's various rungs serving as reference points in an universe that is in a state of eternal cyclical movement.

Yet again, the concept of a stable, hierarchical world-order is sacrificed to that of a world in a state of eternal revolution.

The orthodox scale is ambivalent; it expresses both the concepts of stability and change, as Professor Tillyard points out: 'Now, although the creatures are assigned their precise place in the chain of being, there is at the same time the possibility of change. .... The chain of being is educative both in the marvels of its static self and in its implications of ascent.'<sup>9</sup> Basically, the chain serves as a convenient method for delineating natural distinctions between living things, thus putting the emphasis on stability, while the scale stresses the volition as well as the power to develop and move, emphasizing change. Where Cyrano parts company with his predecessors is in using the stages on the ladder merely as pegs on which to hang his description of an ever-changing reality, seeing the universe as a dynamic totality. Whether he refers to a progressive or a cyclic change, the concept of

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9. The Elizabethan World Picture, ed. cit., p.40.

central importance is that of eternal flux. In all his references to metempsychosis, however, it is the cyclical theory which predominates.

In the Sun, the problems posed for the individual by death are discussed by the birds as they lead Dyrcona to his execution. They try to console him, arguing that:

le mesme rencontre qui, parmy l'infinité du temps, a pû faire que tu sois, ne peut-il pas faire quelque jour que tu sois encor un autre coup? La matière qui, à force de se mesler, est enfin arrivée à ce nombre, cette disposition et cet ordre nécessaires à la construction de ton estre, peut-elle pas en se remeslant arriver à une disposition requise pour faire que tu te sentes estre encor une autre fois? Ouy mais, me diras-tu, je ne me souviendray pas d'avoir esté. Hé! mon cher frère, que t'importe, pourveu que tu te sentes estre?<sup>10</sup>

The assumption is clearly made that a pattern of creation obtaining at any one point in time may be repeated at some future date, but it is equally clear that this phenomenon is of little value to the individual. Once again, the punitive and rewarding role of metempsychosis is eradicated. We may go further: on every occasion that Cyrano refers to metempsychosis, he shows that it has meaning on the collective level only.

In talking of the individual, we are really doing so within a very limited framework: that of all that is contained within the physical limits of a separate body at any one point in time. Birth, or the formation of a separate living entity, and death, or the complete disintegration of the matter composing

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10. A.M., p. 162.

that separate living entity, would seem to mark clearly and precisely the chronological boundaries of individuality; yet, in Cyrano's thought, even this is questionable. For, as we have seen from his theories of atomic creation and of the assimilation of matter through eating, we are nothing other than the combination of atoms which form our bodies, and yet we are constantly assimilating new matter into those bodies. Thus, while, obviously, on death, we cease once and for all to be that which we were in life - by definition, may we not equally well argue that, at any point in time, we are not the same person that we were in the past, nor will be in the future? The birds' enjoinder to Dyrcona, 'que t'importe, pourveu que tu te sentes estre?', is of primordial importance in understanding Cyrano's world-vision, for if we do not feel that which we are, here and now, we can hardly regard ourselves as possessing any personality at all. Ever-changing in his material structure, a man is necessarily ever-changing in his nature and very identity; in this sense, we are constantly dying and being born. Given, then, that a man lives in a continuously evolving world and is himself continuously changing, to live, he must live in the present; in a very real sense, the past and future are, for the individual, non-existent.

Viewed thus, it can be seen that the whole notion of progression up the scale of being through the assimilation of matter, whether by conscious aspiration, or as an automatic, natural process, is something of a play on words. Despite the daemon's mode of expression - 'vous devez savoir que la Terre

se faisant un arbre' (my italics), it is clear that, here, as in every instance quoted, no creature ever becomes a member of another species while it yet lives; to do so is a logical impossibility; that it does so after death is, as the birds' conversation with Dyrcona illustrates, of no real consequence, for such a change constitutes a change of identity as well as of form. Strictly speaking, one can speak of progression up the scale only in terms of Nature as a whole; while it is true that the earth does become part of a tree, the tree part of a pig, and the pig part of a Man, logically, the idea can be pursued no further. Two examples from the Lune serve to illustrate this wittily and pertinently, while also showing Cyrano's preoccupation with the idea of assimilation by eating.

In the first example, the young Moon philosopher proves the absurdity of the Christian belief in personal immortality with a somewhat wry conundrum:

Je suppose que vous mangiés un mahométan;  
vous le convertissés, par conséquent, en  
vostre substance! N'est-il pas vray, ce  
mahométan, digéré, se change partie en chair,  
partie en sang, partie en sperme? Vous  
embrasserés vostre femme et de la semence,  
tirée toute entière du cadavre mahométan,  
vous jettés en moulle un beau petit chrestien.  
Je demande: le mahométan [dans la rësurrection]  
aura-t-il son corps? Si la terre [le] luy  
rend, le petit chrestien n'aura pas le sien,  
puisqu'il n'est tout entier qu'une partie de  
celuy du mahométan. Si vous me dites que le  
petit chrestien aura le sien, Dieu desrobera  
donc au mahométan ce que le petit chrestien  
n'a reçeu que de celuy du mahométan. Ainsy

il fault absolument que l'un ou l'autre  
manque de corps!<sup>11</sup>

That it is the Christian and not, as expected, the Muslim infidel who is the cannibal leaves Cyrano's religious satire in no doubt.

The second example is that of the Moon-philosophers who, for their part, know how to profit by death. Superior in caste to their compatriots, they die in an altogether more constructive manner. While generally on the moon 'hormis les criminels tout le monde est bruslé,' the philosopher, being able to choose his moment and mode of dying, instructs his best friend to stab him, so that all his friends may drink his blood and feast upon his body. This act being followed by a bout of love-making, the dead man's hope is that something of his nature may be recaptured in the offspring resulting from the mating of those who now possess within themselves his very matter.<sup>12</sup>

The similarity between these two incidents is striking: both take the belief in the dependence of all human

11. A.M., pp. 94-5. The bracketed additions are taken from the Munich manuscript, the main body of the text being cited from P. This passage has generally been regarded as fanciful and extravagant; however, the same problem is posed, this time with the Christian being eaten by the cannibal, in the apologetic of Jean de Loyac, entitled Le libertin converty, Paris, 1635, p. 381. His solution to the problem, that 'chacun de nous doit resusciter avec la mesme chair qu'il a apporté du ventre de sa mère', God filling in the flesh which has been lost, hardly convinces. Far from explaining how this may come about, De Loyac attempts to convince by a somewhat abstruse analogy from Greek mythology: 'Je vous dis que cette chair unitte et digérée, et dont le chyle qui en est sorty, s'est écoulé dans toutes les veines du Cyclope, ne revivra pas en la personne de Polypheme, mais en celle des compagnons d'Ulysse'.

12. A.M., pp. 85-6.

qualities upon the material make-up of the person displaying them quite literally; both show that the delineating mark between one individual and another is far from distinct, while there is the same sophistic playing with the whole notion of identity as in our original passage. For, both these passages show that the term 'individual' is really a very subjective one, all the emphasis, objectively, being upon the collective reality. Both, in short, rely on the premises established in Cyrano's theory of 'metempsychosis'. Incidentally, if we compare the first example, put forward by the young Moon philosopher, with the argument of the daemon which I quoted at the outset, we discover a curious illustration of verbal gymnastics: for the philosopher argues against immortality on the basis of exactly the same theory as the daemon had depended upon but a page or two earlier, to defend the concept. In both cases, it is clear that, for the individual tree, or pig, or man, the notion of immortality and of progression up the scale is irrelevant and illusory.

Thus, there is little difference, if any, from a physical point of view, between vertical progress up the scale of being and cyclical change incorporating movement continuously up and down the scale. Since the hierarchical connotation has disappeared, the two descriptions express but a single vision. The one constant in all these theories remains that of the continuous change in aspect of all living matter, and it is precisely this idea that is summed up in the Spaniard, Gonzales's all in all theory.

Since all is derived from primary matter argues  
Gonzales:

de cette façon, dans un homme il y a tout  
 ce qu'il faut pour composer un arbre;  
 de cette façon, dans un arbre il y a tout  
 ce qu'il faut pour composer un homme.  
 Enfin de cette façon, toutes choses se  
 rencontrent en toutes choses, mais il  
 nous manque un Prométhée pour faire cet  
 extract. 13

Here the effect of Cyrano's materialism is to run directly counter to the hierarchic notion of progression. If the assumption is made that Man is truly microcosmic, then, by the same token, Gonzales suggests that the tree also is potentially so. This passage is the only one in the Autre Monde, however, where there is any suggestion that a member of a species low on the ladder of creation may contain within itself the necessary atoms to change itself into a creature higher up the ladder. The idea seems to contradict that of atomic creation, but this impression is somewhat mitigated by the reference to the necessity of a Prometheus. For it is the ratio of different kinds of atom which goes to make up a man rather than a tree. The basic types of atom may exist in a tree, but the correct atomic mixture necessary to form a man will never, naturally, evolve from any existent tree. The inference that Man is basically of similar make-up to the tree does, however, reinforce the idea of the oneness of Nature, and, at the same time, of the essential sameness of various kinds of creature. While, in practice, save in the regions of the Sun, no tree ever becomes a man, nor any man, a tree, theoretically, the

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13. A.M., p. 52. (Manuscript version - M and P)



mounting of the scale of being is no more difficult than its descent, or vice versa. Man does not lie outside Nature: he is an integral part of a universe in which every creature is as important as any other, since all are necessary to express Nature fully. Once more Man is pushed out of his central position: To be at the top of the scale confers no special privilege.

Whether Cyrano describes Nature in terms of vertical progression up the scale of being, of ascent and descent of the scale, or of a non-hierarchical, horizontal movement from tree to Man and Man to tree, essentially, the scale has reverted to a mere chain, and that a circular one. From expressing the desire of all creatures to attain to their creator, in Cyrano's hands the scale serves to describe monistic materialism.

Yet, the retention of the notion of aspiration or desire to rise in the scale, in a Godless, non-spiritual universe, does pose a problem, for as Monsieur Denis points out:

N'est-ce pas sortir des considérations purement matérialistes que de supposer dans la Nature une aspiration, je ne dis pas au changement, mais à un progrès quelconque? Et fera-t-on jamais sortir de l'idée des propriétés de la matière, l'idée de progrès?<sup>14</sup>

Or to pose the problem a slightly different way: May we not justifiably argue that, while banishing the spiritual from his universe, Cyrano would yet seem to retain notions dependent upon a belief in such a dimension? Given that the Godhead

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14. Quoted by Lachèvre, A.M., p. 91, nl.

has been removed from the scale, what motivation may be substituted for the desire of each species to ascend to its top rung? How can creatures express any conscious will to be other than they are, given that the very nature of their soul is determined by their material composition?

Giordano Bruno, with his pantheistic monism, solved the problem easily, since, for him, the world-soul is the expression of the divinity: each creature's striving to realize fully its potential, assures a divinized nature of its fullest expression, so that the world-soul does constitute a form of divine will. Thus, a spiritualized matter possesses, naturally, an innate desire to attain to 'le plus beau mixte'.

Cyrano emulates the Nolan in all these respects save in the belief in the divine quality of the world-soul. The difficulty of accounting for a material aspiration resembles that, appreciated by Gonzales, at any rate by the Gonzales of the 1657 text,<sup>15</sup> of finding a Prometheus to afford sentience to primary matter. But, for Cyrano, the solution is clear; fire, by virtue of its round atomic structure, has the natural property of giving life. The fiery world-soul, by its very nature, cannot but impart the kind of functions which various combinations of matter will perform when it gives them the necessary impetus; presumably, likewise, we may explain away the aspiration to rise in the scale, as a natural movement, and not a conscious will:

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15. Cf. A.M., p. 52, vt. f: 'il nous manque un Prométhée qui nous tire du sein de la Nature, et nous rende sensible, ce que je veux bien appeller matière première'.

the fusion of atoms into bodies of ever-greater complexity in practice follows, as we have already shown, an observable, though unpredictable, that is a natural, pattern. Mr. Denis does not question the idea of the assimilation of matter by eating in non-spiritual creatures, but it is precisely in these terms that Cyrano conceives of the aspiration to rise in the scale. If we accept Mr. Denis's objection, therefore, by inference, we must also question every other aspect of Cyrano's dynamic materialism.

At Cyrano's hand the scale of being expresses a physical reality, losing its moral import, and, thus, can serve no longer as a basis for anthropocentrism. Far from upholding the orthodox world-picture, with all its attendant values, the scale is used by him as a weapon against it. Basically, it serves as a convenient means of classifying living matter. Through it, Cyrano can express the idea of constant change, relinquishing the notion of stability which the chain traditionally expressed: To express the very idea of change, one needs a certain number of reference points against which to describe it, and this is the main role of the chain or scale for Cyrano. Thus, the term 'death', for example, serves as a reference point, though, in fact, during our life-time we are constantly altering, physically and mentally.

Man forms an integral part of this constantly changing world, but only a part of a whole which is attractive

precisely on account of its rich variety of forms and aspects. It is the collective reality, in nature as an ever-emergent force, which fascinates Cyrano: Man, as a part of that whole, is of no more nor less importance than any other part. Immortality has no meaning on a personal level; conversely, Man, beast, and plant alike partake of an impersonal, collective immortality which is virtually nothing other than an expression of the eternity of the universe. The term 'metempsychosis' expresses this world-vision and has no connection with any system of reward and punishment in an after-life. It is significant that, in a highly satirical novel, Cyrano uses a term normally exploited for its satirical potential, with the minimum of such import. Only twice does he approach this traditional use: in the reference to the 'Pontife' who derives from a clump of grass, where, as we have seen, the satire is, in fact, of a rather different nature, and in the birds' reassurance to Dyrcona, in the Sun, that he may after death, be lucky enough to become a fly.<sup>16</sup>

For the hierarchical system of values which the scale of being traditionally represented, Cyrano has substituted a timeless, and non-hierarchical set of values, universally applicable. It is not the place of a particular creature on the scale that determines its worth, but its capacity to 'se sentir estre'. Likewise, it is the use which the creature makes of the life-force within him which is of paramount

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16. A.M., pp. 160-1.

importance in judging a man's worth. To realize to the full all one's potential - atomically determined - is to be worthy of praise. As we have already seen in the preceding chapter, it is that ethereal fire which constitutes the principle of life, which is Cyrano's constant preoccupation, and, in his opinion, it is a sin against Nature, that is, against life, not to exploit and appreciate its expression in us.

It is for this reason that the scale of being does serve as a vehicle for satire on Man, and the very ambivalence of the notion of scale as against chain, of progression up the scale as against cyclical change, serves as its basis. This dual manner in which the various rungs on the ladder of creation are described, provides a dual source of satire, and it is here that the two modes of description take on importance. Man, viewed as that 'perfection' after which all creatures aspire, is castigated for not proving worthy of his unique position; viewed as but one stage in the universal chain, he is ridiculed for presuming to be superior to other creatures. Either way, he is no better than the rest of creation.

In the next chapter, I shall examine in more detail the attitudes expressed in the Autre Monde with regard to reason and to sensation, and the correlation between these and Cyrano's attack on anthropocentrism.

CHAPTER IVMAN IN THE UNIVERSE: THE ATTACK ON ANTHROPOCENTRISM

Erica Harth has examined in detail Cyrano's satire on man in chapter IV of her book, Cyrano de Bergerac and the Polemics of Modernity (New York, 1970). Entitled 'Satirical relativism', this chapter concludes her argument that 'Cyrano surpasses the modernity of his predecessors and associates himself in spirit with the band of intellectual rebels that were to follow him'. In her view, Cyrano's ideas and, in particular, the audacity with which he expresses them 'warrant considering him as one of the earliest Moderns'. One reason for this lies, she says, in 'an epistemological program conceived along Cartesian lines'.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Harth does, it is true, point out that the rejection of the orthodox astronomy 'meant not so much the loss of a central position and thereby of human dignity as it did the loss of a unique position', and she does state that with the 'vitalistic materialism' of Cyrano 'a basic equality of all creatures is automatically established';<sup>2</sup> yet, still, she relates Cyrano's attack on anthropocentrism to the beast-machine, man-machine, debate, and his beasts' and plants' criticisms of man to that relativism which was to characterize eighteenth-

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1. Op. cit., pp. 210-11.

2. Ibid., pp. 139, 193.

century thought. She does mention the similarity of facets of Cyrano's text to the 'theriophily' of Montaigne in the Apologie de Raimond Sebond, but tends even here to talk of those similarities in Cartesian terms (she writes for instance: 'Cyrano's satire of animal automatism abounds with echoes of Montaigne',<sup>3</sup> thus appearing to beg the question.). Conversely, while she takes note of the various instances of the praising of Nature in the Autre Monde, she tends to interpret this praise as a satirical device rather than as a constructive notion, valid in its own right. Indeed, far from entertaining the notion as praiseworthy herself, she refers on several occasions to it as 'primitivistic'.<sup>4</sup> Though never stated, one has the impression throughout that Dr. Harth's yardstick is a Cartesian one. Thus, while this exegesis is valuable in establishing the relevance of Cyrano's writings to the new philosophy, it is questionable in how far it enables the reader to glean the gist of Cyrano's arguments in terms of his universe. Again, does Cyrano use the term 'la raison' in the same way as the new philosophers, as Erica Harth's study would appear to assume? Given the aims of this study, it would seem advisable to examine anew this aspect of Cyranian thought.

That Cyrano would believe anthropocentric attitudes to be misguided is predictable in the light of his physical depiction of the cosmos: his infinite universe comprized of one

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3. Ibid., p. 169. (My italics)

4. Ibid., pp. 160, 168, 175.

prime matter which takes on many guises, his wholly material force or soul - ethereal fire - which gives life and instigates movement, and his belief that all is in all, are descriptions of Nature which account for all phenomena and all forms of living by a single principle. The levelling consequences of such a world-picture would surely be glimpsed by the reader even without the specific recourse to satire on human attitudes and institutions.

If the reader does not always discern these consequences readily, this may well be due to the ambivalent manner in which Cyrano makes use of contemporary commonplaces which, themselves, typify the orthodox world: that the scale of being should revert to a mere chain, and that a circular one, is precisely what we should expect given Cyrano's materialistic monism; as we have seen, the use he does make of the doctrine of the great chain of being consists in a combination of the old and the new, drawn upon variously to suit his satirical purpose. Another theory central to the orthodox world-picture - the micro-macrocosmic correspondence - is similarly used in a context which gainsays its original import, while, at the same time assuming it.

The notion that man is a microcosm is, I think, an underlying assumption in the circularité universelle episode, and in this is linked with the metamorphosis of the sun inhabitants into a handsome youth. The idea of mites in mites, in man, extends the theory of the little world of man in the cosmos; in the orthodox theory both worlds are finite, however, whereas,



in Cyrano's, there exists an infinite series of worlds, extending from the infinitely small (or, more exactly, the almost infinitely small) to the infinitely great universe. Thus, man is no longer at the centre; he is but one stage in an universe which, by nature of its infinity, can have no centre. Nevertheless, Cyrano does retain the idea of a central organizational force in man, namely his will-power. The handsome youth comprized of the sun inhabitants is no more important a creature, because no different in kind than the miraculous tree which his living components had chosen to form themselves into a moment before his creation, nor than the river and eagle which they had been prior to that. All consist of the fiery-natured sun-men, but, in the case of the youth, the composite organism works only when led by the sun-men's king. We perceive in these two variations on the microcosmic theme the break up of all the values which it had represented; at the same time, there is the same reluctance to forego an organizational principle exterior to the matter organized as we have already observed in the moon academician's atomic theory of the formation of living beings: in all three instances, an immanentist account of life is afforded an extra, and apparently unnecessary, organizing principle. There is, then, a structural similarity here between Cyrano's physics and his satire.<sup>5</sup> In both Cyrano draws upon two apparently conflicting

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5. The cironalité universelle, episode (A.M., pp. 71-3) and the story of the sun inhabitants' metamorphoses (A.M., pp. 138-67) are discussed in more detail in chapter VI below, pp. 336-41.

accounts in order to depict a single principle. If his diverse satirical means seem to contradict each other, they yet illustrate one moral purpose.

Anthropocentric attitudes are criticized in the main, in the Lune, during the trial of Dyrcona, and, in the Soleil, in the bird kingdom. In both, the monde renversé technique is adopted. The central issue throughout is whether man's behaviour bears witness to his possession of reason or not: throughout, the traditional classification of man as a rational being is taken for granted in every satirical argument. The attack on human pride takes two forms: some of Cyrano's characters demonstrate that man abuses a gift which constitutes his highest perfection, while beings of the lower orders, plants, birds, and mammals, ridicule man for his assumption of a superiority which, in their opinion, neither his behaviour nor his nature rightfully afford him. It is not so much the faculty of reason which is regarded as deficient as man's ability to use it. A third approach, separate from, and less direct an attack than, the other two, consists in the praise of sensation as a path to knowledge, and in the proposition that certain creatures possess sensory faculties superior in range and effectiveness to man's. The first two methods are, in effect, variant forms of one and the same criticism, that men fail to act, or to judge even, according to standards which the various protagonists in the novels consider to be indicative of rationally or reasonably motivated conduct. The third approach is more radical, in that it has to do with ways of knowing, whereas the

first two have to do with the success with which men make use of the faculties they possess.

The advantage of Cyrano's satirical method is that the reader is afforded a double image of his faults; either man is endowed with reason, but does not use it, or, man cannot be endowed with this faculty, since his conduct shows no evidence of his possessing it. Both attitudes reinforce the claim that man abuses a gift which is precious and unique. The dual attack is carried a stage further in the lunar and solar trials by means of inversion of roles: the lunarians, regarded by Dyrcona as animals because they walk on all-fours, consider themselves to be men and Dyrcona a monkey devoid of reason, but, in their behaviour, demonstrate exactly the same irrational quirks as do men. The birds consider themselves to be rational and immortal and homo sapiens to be a monster lacking in these attributes, yet their treatment of Dyrcona is emotionally determined rather than logically valid. On the one hand, the social institutions of the lunarians are superior to those of earth-men, on the other, their dignitaries, like their populace, act in exactly the same irrational and prejudiced manner as do their counterparts in the world known to the reader. The birds criticize man for his murderous propensity and his political system for its injustice, yet they are equally murderous and equally unjust in their handling of Dyrcona's trial. In this way, Cyrano's fictional characters mirror the human failings they decry.

Both the lunarians and the birds deride Dyrcona from the moment that they set eyes upon him because of his unfamiliar appearance. In what is clearly a pastiche of the trite but orthodox argument that man's upright position proves his

superiority over the beast, and, in particular, his close link with God whom he may behold directly from that position, the moon-men ridicule Dyrcona for his inability to walk, like them, on all-fours, and conclude that he must be some kind of monkey.<sup>6</sup> The satirical import of this reversal of roles is underscored by the daemon:

Hé bien, mon fils, vous portés enfin la peine des foiblesses de vostre Monde. Il y a du vulgaire, icy comme là, qui ne peut souffrir la pensée des choses où il n'est point accoustumé, mais sçachez qu'on ne vous traite qu'à la pareille, et que si quelqu'un de cette terre avoit monté dans la vostre avec la hardiesse de se dire homme, vos docteurs le feroient estouffer comme un monstre ou comme un singe possédé du Diable.<sup>7</sup>

The birds, likewise, cannot judge Dyrcona by any other criterion than that of what they are used to; like men, they assume that any creature which neither looks nor behaves as they do must be of an inferior nature:

Hé quoy, murmuroient-ils l'un à l'autre, il n'a ny bec, ny plumes, ny griffes, et son âme seroit spirituelle? O Dieux! quelle impertinence!<sup>8</sup>

Though the two trials of Dyrcona are superficially similar, there is a marked progression from the first to the second, both in the nature of the accusation made and in the defence case proffered; the lunarians attack Dyrcona's beliefs, and, in this, act in exactly the same manner as the philosophers,

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6. A.M., p. 32. Cf. C.A. Patrides, 'Renaissance ideas on Man's upright form' in Journal of the History of Ideas, April 1958 (vol. XIX, no. 2), pp. 256-8, where the author shows that the idea derives from Plato, is adopted by the Church fathers, and becomes a European and English commonplace during the Renaissance.

7. A.M., p. 33.

8. A.M., p. 150.

priests, and legislators whom Dyrcona has left behind in France. The birds condemn him at the outset for being a man; however much his behaviour may belie his human nature, still, by his very essence he is held guilty. The approximation of Dyrcona to a monkey delineates the shift in the nature of the crime: if the lunarians are only too willing to believe that the dissident notions of Dyrcona are those of a monkey, all his efforts to be thought a member of that species by the birds are thwarted. Both episodes illustrate the intolerance of individuals as of those in authority: Dyrcona's response to the lunarians' dismissal of the Scholastic physics which he had accepted piecemeal from his teachers in France is as bigoted as their refusal to believe that their moon could be an earth, and their earth a moon; the birds do not want to hear any good of Dyrcona, and stop their ears, so that they are all as hasty and unthinking in their judgment of him as they accuse men of being, as a species, to them. However, their opinion of human behaviour involves a moral directive also, that man should revere all living things; his anthropocentrism is not only misguided in that it vitiates his reasoning, but also in that its logical consequence is acts of moral turpitude. To reason badly is to abuse one's human nature, to kill a creature of whatever species is to sin against Nature herself.

Despite the similarity in form, the moon and bird trials serve rather different satirical ends. The first does not attack human pride, but illustrates from four viewpoints how men misuse the very faculty which provides their justification

of anthropocentrism. The populace condemn Dyrcona for not being of similar appearance to themselves; later, they accept him as possibly as rational a creature as themselves by exactly the same criterion: he becomes like them just so soon as he learns to converse with them in their lunar language. The priests see in Dyrcona a threat to their authority, so that their inability to adjust their beliefs in the light of experience is a much more deliberately assumed standpoint than is Dyrcona's or that of the populace they keep in check. The daemon, for his part, characterizes these errors of judgement in a variant form in his defence of Dyrcona.

Dyrcona is just as unquestioning as the lunar priests wish their populace to be, for the very Aristotelian theories which he is willing to accept on the mere authority of his teachers are at variance with the experience he has so recently enjoyed of interplanetary travel. The lunar priests' insistence, in their turn, that he declare that 'this moon here is not a moon but a world; and that that world down there is not a world but a moon' - and this despite Dyrcona's experience to the contrary - witnesses to precisely the same lack of good sense. The daemon makes the same point from the opposite standpoint: however much weight is brought to bear on the individual to accept a particular theory, he is as free to believe what is wrong as what is right, for liberty of conscience necessarily escapes the bounds of authority. If the essence of a creature is reason, then that creature is, by definition, free to think whatever he likes:

S'il est homme, quand mesme il ne seroit pas  
venu de la Lune, puisque tout homme est libre,

ne luy est-il pas libre de s'imaginer ce qu'il voudra? Quoy! pouvés-vous le contraindre à n'avoir que vos visions? Vous le forcerez bien à dire qu'il croit que la Lune n'est pas un Monde, mais il ne le croira pas pourtant .... il vous dira bien qu'il croit, mais il ne le croira pas pour cela.<sup>9</sup>

A man will believe what is most 'plausible'. It is experience not reason which shows us what is, but that experience is limited; thus, somewhat ironically, the confrontation of Dyrcona with the lunarians teaches us two apparently contradictory lessons, that it is wrongheaded to think that our experience - our organisms, customs, behaviour, and beliefs - is the only valid one, and that, by the same token, our experience is our only sure guide. In other words, the controlling factor in an assessment of our ability to reason is our reasonability, or good sense; there is no objective criterion of whether we possess the faculty of reason or not formulated in the world of the Autre Monde, and this, for the very good reason that Cyrano's purpose is moral, not epistemological. The various attitudes illustrated in the moon trial cohere in satirical terms, for, in each case, Cyrano advocates freedom of thought and expression. In the bird trial, Dyrcona is condemned on the same grounds: that man, who takes for granted the freedom to treat other species as he will, in so doing, denies them the ultimate freedom of expression which consists in the act of living itself.

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9. A.M., p. 59.

For the lunarians and the birds reason is a valuable and cherished asset. The irony implicit in Cyrano's satire is akin to that of the opening phrase of Descartes's Méthode, itself a reminiscence of Montaigne's remark, 'On dit communément que le plus juste partage que nature nous aye fait de ses graces, c'est celui du sens: car il n'est aucun qui ne se contente de ce qu'elle luy en a distribué'.<sup>10</sup> It is this complacency above all with which the reader is confronted in the moon trial episode; the moon - earth parallel affords the reader three sets of images of the one vice, as in a trompe-l'oeil effect: he watches Dyrcona, who watches the lunarians, who, in their turn gaze on Dyrcona, the identical behaviour of each rebounding the one upon the other like simultaneous reflections in a set of mirrors. It is attitudes and beliefs, not the faculty of reason, which is being attacked. This serves as a backcloth in the episode of the bird kingdom, but the fact that the inverted image is no longer a faithful one of man looking at man, but of a purportedly inferior species - the bird - decrying the self-appointed superior one of homo sapiens, alters completely the gist of the satire. For the birds argue that man's judgements are necessarily false on account of the partiality of the data available to him, culled as it is through his feeble and slow-working sense perceptions:

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10. Essais, II, xvii (Pléiade ed., Paris, 1950, p. 742); Descartes (Discours de la Méthode, ed. G. Gadoffre, Manchester, 1941, p.3) writes in the same wry vein: 'Le bon sens est la chose du monde la mieux partagée; car chacun pense en être si bien pourvu que ceux même qui sont les plus difficiles à contenter en toute autre chose n'ont point coutume d'en désirer plus qu'ils en ont.' Descartes's definition of 'bon sens' differs diametrically from Montaigne's, however; for Montaigne, there can be various degrees and expressions of 'sens', whereas, for Descartes, there cannot. The operative field of Cyrano's 'raison' approximates to Montaigne's 'sens', rather than to Cartesian Reason, or 'bon sens'.



Encor, adjoustoient-ils, si c'estoit un animal qui approchast un peu davantage de nostre figure, mais justement le plus dissemblable et le plus affreux; enfin une beste chauve, un oiseau plumé, une chimère amassée de toutes sortes de natures, et qui fait peur à toutes: L'Homme, dis-je (Margot, the magpie), si sot et si vain, qu'il se persuade que nous n'avons esté faits que pour luy; l'Homme qui, avec son âme si clairvoyante, ne scauroit distinguer le sucre d'avec l'arsenic, et qui avalera de la ciguë que son beau jugement luy auroit fait prendre pour du persil; l'Homme qui soutient qu'on ne raisonne que par le rapport des sens, et qui cependant a les sens les plus foibles, les plus tardifs et les plus faux d'entre toutes les Créatures; l'Homme enfin que la Nature, pour faire de tout, a crée comme les Monstres, mais en qui pourtant elle a infus l'ambition de commander à tous les animaux et de les exterminer.<sup>11</sup>

Here the intention is clearly an attack on anthropocentrism, the evaluation of man's sensory and rational faculties being the instrument of satire rather than its end; the daemon's assessment of man's capabilities, however, had been disparaging of human sensory capacity, and had been so in a less overtly satirical context. His story of the intellectual cabbage, likewise, prepares the way for the levelling inferences of the birds' attitudes in the Soleil, as also, the parallel made by the oak of Dodona between human functions and those of trees corroborates them.<sup>12</sup>

Nowhere in the Autre Monde is it suggested that the faculty of reason itself is a faulty instrument. Cyrano's attack on man is geared rather to an upgrading of the so-called 'lower' orders of creation. If the daemon emphasizes the

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11. A.M., p. 150.

12. A.M., p. 168: 'les arbres exercent, soit du corps, soit de l'âme, toutes vos fonctions'.

acuity and range of his sense perceptions, he does not compare these unfavourably with man's reasoning capacity but with human sensory faculties. The point he makes is that it is possible to apprehend reality immediately through sensation, since all phenomena are natural and material. In the same conversation he has already explained to Dyrcona why he lives on the moon; among his reasons the chief one is the lunarians' love of what is true, witnessed to by the fact that they prefer to trust their own reasoning to the authority of the learned or of the crowd.<sup>13</sup> The fact that it is the daemon's superior senses which account for his position at the top of the scale is a separate issue from his evaluation of reasoning ability. Each is a valid way of knowing; the daemon is superior because his sensory apparatus apprehends more than man's. While it is true that human reason cannot do the job that the daemon's senses are competently performing, it is envisaged as a critical apparatus rather than as an alternative to sensation in this episode. Nowhere can I find evidence in the Autre Monde of the suggestion of Mme Alcover that, for Cyrano, reason is a compensation for deficient senses.<sup>14</sup> Here, she would seem to endow reason with the same special value as that which Dr. Harth affords it, yet Cyrano himself never suggests that to praise reason is to prefer it to sensation as a path to knowledge, or

13. A.M., p. 36. For the daemon's explanation of his superior nature see A.M., pp. 37-8, and cf. above, chapter II, pp. 133-5, and chapter III, pp. 189-90.

14. See her book La Pensée philosophique et scientifique de Cyrano de Bergerac, Geneva, 1970, p. 153: 'La raison dans l'homme n'est donc pas l'instinct, mais cette faculté grâce à laquelle on supplée à l'instinct. L'homme étant imparfait dans ses sens, à cause de leur insuffisance, a en lui la possibilité d'y remédier en partie'.

the reverse; this is a Cartesian, not a Cyranian premise. He is consistent, however, throughout the Autre Monde in arguing that the possession of reason confers no privilege, but does demand that one use it well. These points are most tellingly made in the episode of the intellectual cabbage, where it is argued that the lowliest of creatures, a mere plant, is as valuable an expression of Nature as is man.

In the versions of the manuscript copies the daemon recounts the imaginary diatribe of the cabbage within the context of the Christian belief in a providential God, demonstrating the injustice of man's attribution to himself of preferential treatment:

Car, dites-moy, ce chou . . . . n'est-il pas autant créature de Dieu que vous? N'avez-vous pas esgallement tous deux pour père et mère Dieu et la privation? Dieu n'a-t-il pas eu, de toute éternité, son intellect occupé de sa naissance, aussy bien que de la vostre? Encore semble-t-il qu'il ayst pourveu plus nécessairement à celle du végétant que du raisonnable, puisqu'il a remis la génération d'un homme au caprice de son père qui pouvoit, pour son plaisir, l'engendrer ou ne l'engendrer pas: rigueur dont cependant il n'a pas voulu traiter avec le chou . . . comme s'il eust appréhendé davantage que la race des Choux périt que celle des hommes, il les contrainct, bon gré, mal gré, de se donner l'estre les uns aux autres. . . . De dire pourtant que Dieu a plus aymé l'homme que le chou, c'est que nous nous chatouillons pour nous faire rire; estant incapable de passion, il ne scauroit ny haïr, ny aymer personne.<sup>15</sup>

Continuing to base his argument on Christian tenets, he adds

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15. A.M., pp. 67-8.

that, in any case, original sin has at once rendered man less lovable in God's eyes than the innocent cabbage, and no longer made spiritually or physically in the likeness of the divinity. Revealed religion is turned against itself, the story of Genesis contradicting the very message of the Gospels. Having used one set of Christian beliefs to debunk another, Cyrano manages to repeat the technique and arrive at the same conclusion in inverse order. Having initially put the case against the privileged position of man in terms of the justice and love of God, and backed it up with the doctrine of original sin, he now assumes that man is privileged and goes on to show that, given that this is so, then surely divine justice demands that cabbages be compensated in some way for their inferior status: men are immortal while cabbages have but one, short stay on earth. To kill this under-privileged, mortal vegetable is surely a greater sin than to kill a creature who will, in any case, enjoy a further life? A just God must cherish his creatures in equal measure; misapplying the dictum of Christ that the first shall be last, Cyrano argues that, though we were created first, yet, 'dans la famille de Dieu, il n'y a point de droit d'aînesse'. Perhaps, instead of our immortality, cabbages possess a cognitive instrument which is more reliable than reason, say 'un intellect universel, une connoissance parfaite de toutes les choses dans leurs causes',<sup>16</sup>

Cyrano's dialectic is subtle and playful: the very paradoxes contained in Christian teaching which, later, Pascal

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16. A.M., pp. 68-9.

was to exploit on behalf of Christianity in the Pensées, when treated of in strictly rational terms are a nonsense. Where Pascal uses the notion of the two natures of man to illustrate the aptness of the doctrine of original sin, a doctrine which dovetails into his account of the paradoxical nature of the human condition, Cyrano indulges in a traditionally Christian exercise - an attack on human pride as a call for humility - with an a-Christian end in view, namely, the valuing of all creatures equally, as equally valid manifestations of Nature. Man's pride is not the sin, but rather the consequences of it, which are his irreverence for other forms of life made manifest in his killing of bird, beast, and plant.<sup>17</sup>

The 1657 text, where the word 'Nature' is systematically substituted for 'Dieu', has the advantage not only of removing the peculiarly religious connotations but also of making Cyrano's moral lesson absolutely clear; the relevant part of the text reads as follows:

Car, dites-moy, ce chou dont vous parlez, n'est-il pas comme vous un Estre existant dans la Nature? Ne l'avez-vous pas tous deux pour mère également? .... De dire pourtant que la Nature a plus aymé l'homme que le chou, c'est que nous nous chatouillons pour nous faire rire; estant incapable de passion, elle ne scauroit ny haïr, ny aymer personne.<sup>18</sup>

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17. Cf. Pensées (Brunschvicg edt.) nos. 60, 441, 417, 442, 445, 430, etc. Cyrano uses a variant of the main argument of the intellectual cabbage episode in the young moon philosopher's case against personal immortality, A.M., p. 89.

18. 1657 edt., pp. 128-9. On the tendency in this edition to substitute 'la Nature' for 'Dieu' see also M. Alcover, op. cit., p. 53.

Cyrano's condemnation of man's treatment of the lower orders of life is wholly in keeping with his physics: it is just as much a crime to eat a cabbage as the flesh of man, since all species are enlivened by the same ethereal fire. All forms of life are in themselves equally important, for the quality of each is dependent upon the organic structure determining its nature and upon no preordained scale of values. That man should assume an attitude of superiority has no justification other than that which derives from a purely subjective assessment of his nature. Every other creature has precisely the same right, or lack of it, to take up such a stance. If he follows the natural moral code, man will afford the same rights to cabbage, bird, or beast as to himself.

The traditionally held conviction that it is a sin to kill a human being, but not any other species, has no transcendental value; anthropocentrism is nothing but a human whim. 'Se sentir etre' includes se sentir croître and se sentir sentir no less than se sentir raisonner;<sup>19</sup> the only difference between them consists in the creature's mode of expression, not in the intensity with which the creature feels himself to be, and is. The criticisms levelled against man by the moon-men, the daemon's cabbage, and the sun-birds alike, illustrate a single vision of the world, in which man has exactly the same moral code as all other forms of life: to live and let live. This is why the daemon, like the moon academicians, will eat only meat or

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19. Cf. A.M., p. 162: 'Hé! mon cher frère, que t'importe, pourveu que tu te sentes estre?'

vegetation which has died a natural death.<sup>20</sup> It is also why, for the birds, man appears to be a naturally unnatural creature:

l'Homme enfin que la Nature, pour faire de tout, a créé comme les Monstres, mais en qui pourtant elle a infus l'ambition de commander à tous les animaux et de les exterminer.<sup>21</sup>

Man kills wilfully, for sport; he does not heed the natural instinct to revere life. Surely, any creature which knowingly and wantonly kills another behaves so monstrously that Nature must regret having created it? So argues the prosecuting counsel at Dyrcona's trial:

Je pense, Messieurs, qu'on n'a jamais révoqué en doute que toutes les créatures sont produites par nostre commune Mère, pour vivre en société. Or si je prouve que l'homme semble n'estre né que pour la rompre, ne prouveray-je pas qu'allant contre la fin de sa création, il mérite que la Nature se repente de son ouvrage?<sup>22</sup>

In depriving another creature of its life, in effect, man deprives the world of an essential part of itself. In an universe in which all is in all, by so doing, a man indirectly also destroys a part of himself. At the very least, this constitutes a rejection of his birthright.

There is a more constructive variant of this moral directive: not only should one not kill; one has a responsibility to live to the full. If all one can ask of a cabbage is that it vegetate well, one may and should demand of a human

20. A.M., p. 67.

21. A.M., p. 150.

22. A.M., p. 158.

being that he feel and reason to the best of his ability. Here, the lessons of the birds cohere with the satire of the earlier lunar trial. The birds' solace in the face of death depends for its efficacy on the acceptance of a corporate view of life in keeping with the theory of the transposition of matter developed in the Lune. Death is experienced by all of mother Nature's offspring, so that it cannot be evil; but, in any case, is it not possible that, at some time in the future, one's organism may be re-formed? That one does not recall one's former existence is beside the point, they argue; the essential is that Nature be expressed and that each creature experience to the full the part that it is necessarily playing in that common expression. It is the intensity of feeling which counts, not the identity of the owner of that feeling. Similarly, man's special endowment of reason merely places upon him the special responsibility of using it well.<sup>23</sup>

While examining the daemon's defence of Dyrcona, Erica Harth remarks that Cyrano at once praises animal instinct, seeing in it the voice of Nature, and, by endowing the lunar 'animals' with reason, praises that faculty; the two attitudes are, in her opinion contradictory, the first 'anti-intellectual', the second 'intellectual'. She concludes that the paradox is more apparent than real, since 'the anti-intellectualistic aspect of theriophily is, however, for this lover of reason, only incidental'. This solution is not only a compromise,

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23. Cf. A.M., pp. 161-2, and above, chapter III, pp. 194-5.



but one which seems to miss the point, a point which Dr. Harth herself makes a little later when discussing the story of the cabbage:

Mongrédien considers the rather long exposition by the démon of the life and nature of the choux intellectuels .... a key passage in the Autre Monde, illustrative of Cyrano's entire philosophical outlook. It is most certainly a culminating point in the satire and a forceful résumé of the main objects of Cyrano's ridicule. Perhaps in no more dramatic way, could man be charged with anthropocentrism than by a plant which humans have deemed among the lowliest forms of life.<sup>24</sup>

One can now see that the very terms on which Dr. Harth conducts her argument are open to question, for it is not the praise or condemnation of the intellect that is at stake here, but rather Cyrano's notion of what constitutes man's responsibility. The underlying link between the apparently contradictory positions adopted in the former episode referred to is not reason; it is the rôle of man in the universe. Similarly, Cyrano's attack on anthropocentrism includes an undermining of human sensory faculties, for exactly the same reason as that incorporated in our agreed interpretation of the intellectual cabbage episode: since reason and sensation are equally valid activities, then man's merit must be adjudged by both criteria, but also, the vegetable's lack of either capacity does not exclude it from the general appraisal: it may well possess a faculty of knowing the equal of, it not superior to, these faculties, a faculty which Cyrano terms 'intellectual', but which is immediate in

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24. Op. cit., p. 168; p. 185.

its functioning. This raises yet another question: does Cyrano understand by the term 'intellect' a form of reason, as critics have always tended to assume?

The daemon's description of Dyrcona in the moon trial is twofold: we can presuppose, he says, either that Dyrcona is a man or 'un animal sans raison'; if he is the latter, then he cannot be condemned, for,

les brutes n'agissent que par instinct de Nature; doncques, c'est la Nature qui le dit [que la Lune est un Monde], et non pas luy; de croire maintenant que cette sçavante Nature qui a faict et la Lune et ce Monde-cy ne sçache elle-mesme ce que c'est et que vous autres, qui n'avés de connoissance que ce que vous en tenés d'elle, le sçachiez plus certainement, cela seroit bien ridicule.<sup>25</sup>

Is not the cabbage's 'intellect' somewhat akin to this 'instinct of Nature'? It too affords the supposed owner of it immediate cognition of what is, without the intermediary of interpretation. Through it the cabbage would know even the causes of all things. This immediacy has a value in itself, as we see later with the universal language of the sunspot episode in the Soleil.

Immediacy approximates to spontaneity and to instinct; all represent most nearly life itself, and are rightly perceived as the most faithful to Nature's intent. The use of the word 'intellect' here is strange to us, but would, I submit, not be so for Cyrano's intended reading public, for it is used here in the root sense of 'intellectus' - awareness or understanding, as it was

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25. A.M., p. 59.

by the sixteenth-century Italian Naturalists.<sup>26</sup> Thus, it is not so much a question in the Autre Monde of whether reason preempts sensation, or vice versa, as of whether instinct does not preempt both. In chapter VII below, I shall deal in more detail with such epistemological problems in the light of Cyrano's monism.

Both in humiliating human 'reason' and in suggesting that some creatures - here, the imaginary character of the Socratic daemon - may possess better sense perceptions, Cyrano's target is not reason or the senses themselves, but anthropocentric attitudes. One last question remains: if Cyrano does not use the term 'intellect' in the sense which we lend to it today, is it not very possible that the same may be said of his use of the term 'raison'? As a check to my thesis I shall finally consider the ground covered so far in terms of a work to which Cyrano's anti-anthropocentric satire is closely approximative, namely Montaigne's Apologie de Raimond Sebond, and then, in terms of his use of the word 'raison' in the Lettre contre les Sorciers as compared with his handling of it in the Autre Monde.

The arguments of the lunarians and of the sun birds at Dyrcona's trials and those of the daemon together parallel closely the development of Montaigne's Apologie (Essais, II, xii). Cyrano, like Montaigne, employs anthropomorphism to combat

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26. E.g., Campanella, who conceives of two aspects of the intellect, the first, 'intellectus sensualis' being common to men and to lower animals, the second, 'intellectus mentalis' being the sole prerogative of men, angels, and God (see B.M. Bonansea, The Theory of Knowledge of Tommaso Campanella, Catholic University of America, Philosophical series no. 159, abstract no. 14, Washington D.C., 1954, ch. II). Cf. also, the Averroan universal intellect.

anthropocentrism, Cyrano through the invention of talking plants, birds, and beasts, Montaigne through a catalogue of specific examples of animal behaviour culled from diverse sources, but all purported to be true records, which, together, demonstrate that animals perform instinctively all those individual and group activities regarded by man as peculiarly human feats. He endows animals also with emotional responses; his instances, taken collectively, span the range of human passions.

Montaigne assumes that the mechanism responsible for animal behaviour is exactly the same in the case of the beast as of man: what appears to be a response indicative of love, affection, sympathy, of fidelity, gratitude, magnanimity, repentance, or clemency, is regarded by him as certainly so. When a pattern of actions or reactions on the part of a particular species resembles rational human behaviour, Montaigne takes it for granted that the beast in question possesses reason. Perhaps, more plausible are his examples of the sophistication of social organization of creatures like the bees and ants. Not only do the beasts do some things like us, however; very often their knowledge and dexterity far surpass ours, and their accomplishments are quite outside the bounds of human understanding. Indeed, it is highly doubtful whether human reason supersedes that of the animal kingdom. Man's fault lies not so much in his lack of the gifts with which certain creatures are naturally endowed as in the pride that is itself tantamount to a refusal to acknowledge his shortcomings:

La presumption est nostre maladie naturelle et originelle. La plus calamiteuse et fraile de toutes les creatures, c'est l'homme, et quant et quant la plus orgueilleuse.<sup>27</sup>

Man's assumption of superiority stems from his belief that all that does not resemble him is of no account:

Quand les bestes auroient donc toute la vertu, la science, la sagesse et suffisance Stoique, ce seroyent tousjours des bestes: ny ne seroyent pourtant comparables à un homme miserable, meschant et insensé. [C'est donc toute nostre perfection que d'estre hommes.] Enfin tout ce qui n'est pas comme nous sommes, n'est rien qui vaille.<sup>28</sup>

How do we know that the beasts do not do the same though? 'Quand je me joue de ma chatte, qui sçait si elle passe son temps de moy plus que je ne fais d'elle?' Montaigne's animals converse with each other, just as do men with men (Cyrano's talking birds and plants might derive from this source quite as easily as from the <sup>anti</sup>Cartesian intent to which Dr. Harth refers).<sup>29</sup>

Montaigne goes on to demonstrate that human reason is no sure guide to knowledge; judgement may be impaired variously by sickness, physical appearance and one's response to it, or by the mere passage of time. All changes as does also the individual himself from moment to moment and from clime to clime. Citing Lucretius, Montaigne reiterates the view that the senses are the root of all knowledge, but doubts whether man's sensory perception is an adequate tool to apprehend reality. Perhaps

27. Montaigne, Essais, ed. cit., p. 497.

28. Ibid., p. 538; cf. pp. 516 and 595.

29. Ibid., p. 498; it is no surprise if men do not understand the languages of the lower animals, argues Montaigne, any more than that Basques fail to comprehend Troglodytes: the reference to the Basques, to which are added the Bretons, is repeated by Pierre Charron in De la Sagesse, Paris, 1783, I, viii, p. 71. While admitting of some of the larger issues, Dr. Harth tends to relate her examination, repeatedly, to the Cartesian position (see op. cit., bottom of page 172; pp. 175-6, and p. 189).

the whole human race is like a naturally blind man describing things in the terms of a sighted individual? Perhaps animals possess senses lacking in us, which would account for all those feats in them which we neither understand nor know how to emulate; he continues:

Les proprieté que nous appellons occultes en plusieurs choses, comme à l'aimant d'attirer le fer, n'est-il pas vray-semblable qu'il y a des facultez sensibles en nature, propres à les juger et à les appercevoir, et que le défaut de telles facultez nous apporte l'ignorance de la vraye essence de telles choses? ... Nous avons formé une verité par la consultation et concurrence de nos cinq sens; mais à l'aventure falloit-il l'accord de huict ou de dix sens et leur contribution pour l'appercevoir certainement et en son essence.

The daemon explains his nature to Dyrcona in precisely the same terms.<sup>30</sup>

So similar are the arguments of Cyrano to those of Montaigne that one is tempted to find in the Apologie a direct source for the satire on man in the Autre Monde. In any case, knowledge of the essay is so widespread at the time that Cyrano was growing up and then writing that there is little need to try to impute a direct borrowing. What is striking is the fact that Cyrano uses all the approaches of Montaigne in his attack on human pride, but that he does so within a different context: Montaigne purports to debase man with a Christian end in view, that is, by demonstrating the futility of relying on reason in a quest for knowledge, to bring the reader to the realization that faith alone is the path to truth. Again,

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30. Essais, ed. cit., pp. 564-8 (quotation, pp. 666-7); A.M., pp. 37-8.

Montaigne gives a good deal of space to the point that all human customs, laws, and even religions are relative to the particular group of men adopting them, whereas Cyrano tends to concentrate on criticizing the actual content of the institutions of his country. The relativity of all truths accessible to man is the main point made in the Apologie, and it is this which links together all the diverse, and sometimes disparate, arguments in the essay; that the particular passage on the relativity of human social, political, and religious institutions was well known to Cyrano's contemporaries is suggested by the close repetition of it in the work of one of them, namely/<sup>of</sup> Pascal in the Pensées.<sup>31</sup> A comparison between the two might also suggest why Cyrano does not take up such a position. Both Montaigne and Pascal presuppose that there is a transcendental dimension, which they regard as the Truth, and that there exists one Truth, universally valid. As I shall hope to demonstrate in Chapter VII below, Cyrano does not. Thus, for Montaigne and Pascal, change is perceived as a stumbling-block, preventing access to knowledge of the Truth, whereas, for Cyrano, it is the aspect of Nature which most truthfully expresses it; change is the only single reality, and, as such, shapes his ethos.

Montaigne openly leans heavily on Lucretius, but it is rather to Democritean atomism that Cyrano owes his similarity of outlook, and it is also, probably, owing to the divergence between these two sources that Cyrano's notion of the role of

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31. Pensée 294 (ed. cit.) follows closely the order as well as content of the development in the Apologie, ed. cit., pp. 653-660.

change in human affairs is diametrically opposed to Montaigne's, 'Nous ne sommes ny au-dessus ny au-dessous du reste: tout ce qui est sous le ciel ... court une loy et fortune pareille' writes Montaigne.<sup>32</sup> Such a world-picture is endorsed in the Autre Monde and is convincingly presented simply because Cyrano's dynamic materialism implies an immanentist conception of the universe. By the same token, however, while Montaigne is disconcerted by an ever-changing vista, seeing in this reality the very grounds for our perpetual ignorance, Cyrano perceives in it the life-force itself. Similarly, Cyrano's satire seems to me to be neither the plea of a sceptic nor of a theist, as his own is for Montaigne (the last, at least ostensibly so); nor is the common denominator of Cyrano's various arguments, in my opinion, that 'sceptic relativism' which Dr. Harth perceives as the characteristic of his satire, for, above all, what is promulgated is a moral perspective.

Montaigne's Apologie is relevant to my contention in a less direct way; for he, even more radically than Cyrano, assumes that beasts ratiocinate. Again, both writers understand the concept of reason in a much wider way than did Descartes or the new philosophers in general. Even more to the point, perhaps, is the fact that it is Descartes who of all his contemporaries breaks with the traditional meaning of the word. The notion that all animals possess at least a primitive faculty of reason is common to Montaigne, Charron, and Gassendi. For Charron

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32. Essais, ed. cit., p. 506.



the distinction between man and beast is one of degree rather than of kind:

Il faut dire, que les bestes rationnent, usent de discours et jugement, mais plus foiblement et imparfaitement que l'homme. Elles sont inferieures en cela à l'homme, et non pas qu'elles n'y ayent du tout point de part. Elles sont inferieures à l'homme, comme entre les hommes les uns sont inferieurs aux autres, et aussy entre les bestes s'y trouve telle difference, mais encores y a-il plus grande difference entre les hommes: car ... il y a plus grande distance d'homme à homme, que d'homme à beste.<sup>33</sup>

Here, Charron is at one with his mentor; that the difference between this standpoint and that of Descartes is a crucial one is a fact that Descartes was the first to acknowledge; on it Cartesian dualism wholly depends; but, still in the late 1640s the point has to be emphasized, as the following extract from Descartes's letter of the 23rd November 1646 to the Marquis of Newcastle demonstrates:

Pour ce qui est de l'entendement ou de la pensée que Montagne et quelques autres attribuent aux bêtes, je ne puis être de leur avis. Ce n'est pas que je ne m'arrête à ce qu'on dit, que les hommes ont un empire absolu sur tous les autres animaux; car j'avoue qu'il y en a de plus forts que nous, et crois qu'il y en peut aussi avoir qui aient des ruses naturelles, capables de tromper les hommes les plus fins. Mais je considère qu'ils ne nous imitent ou surpassent, qu'en celles de nos actions qui ne sont point conduites par notre pensée. .... Car, bien que Montagne et Charron aient dit qu'il y a plus de différence d'homme à homme, que d'homme à bête, il ne s'est toutefois jamais trouvé aucune bête si parfaite, qu'elle ait usé de quelque signe, pour faire entendre à d'autres animaux quelque chose qui n'eût point de rapport à ses passions; et il n'y a point d'homme si imparfait, qu'il n'en use.

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33. Charron, op. cit., I, viii, p. 77.

Descartes goes on to reiterate the image of the clock to explain animal behaviour, already used in Part V of the Méthode:

Je sais bien que les bêtes font beaucoup de choses mieux que nous, mais je ne m'en étonne pas; car cela même sert à prouver qu'elles agissent naturellement et par ressorts, ainsi qu'une horloge, laquelle montre bien mieux l'heure qu'il est, que notre jugement ne nous l'enseigne.<sup>34</sup>

For Gassendi, man differs from the beast in that he is divinely endowed with a rational soul which lends him immortality; but, at the same time, he believes that both beasts and man possess an animal soul: this enables the beast to adapt to circumstance, and, in this far, to make judgements. Nor does he rule out the possibility that animals have the ability to think. Like Montaigne and Charron, he establishes only a difference in degree between animals and man, and not in nature. Despite the mechanistic aspects of his physics, he refuses to go along with a mechanistic explanation of animal behaviour.<sup>35</sup> Again, the sixth Objections to the Méditations, where the beast-machine, man-machine question is specifically raised, follow the traditional ways of thinking. There, it is assumed that animals think; the writer mentions in passing 'les pensées qu'ont les singes, les chiens, et les autres animaux'. He reiterates Montaigne's anti-anthropocentric case: 'Que si

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34. OEuvres et Lettres (Pléiade ed.), Paris, 1952, pp. 1254-6; Discours de la Méthode, ed. cit. pp. 48 and 55.

35. Cf. Fifth Objections to Descartes's Méditations, 'Contre la 2<sup>ème</sup> Méditation', sections III to VII inclusive, resumed in Descartes, OEuvres et Lettres (ed. cit.), pp. 470-1; see also G. Sortais, La philosophie moderne depuis Bacon jusqu'à Leibniz, vol. II, Paris, 1922, pp. 125-6.

vous dites que les chiens ne savent pas qu'ils courent, ou qu'ils pensent, outre que vous le dites sans le prouver, peut-être est-il vrai qu'ils font de nous un pareil jugement'. The idea that beasts work mechanically is dismissed as 'une chose tout à fait impossible et même ridicule'. The man-machine notion is introduced to demonstrate just how silly Descartes's theory is, and not as a plausible hypothesis at all. In context, it completes the anti-anthropocentric argument preceding it.<sup>36</sup>

All the onus is upon Descartes in the discussions of his theories in the 1640s, for he is the odd man out.

Thus, it is neither strange that Cyrano should conduct his case against man in terms akin to Montaigne, nor that it should be evocative of the Cartesian controversy, with its emphasis on the distinction of speech. The elements of the debate must have been commonplace at the time that he was writing each of his novels. If I have quoted as some length from writings of the period, this has been in an endeavour to recreate something of the mood of the debate, now lost to us because of our knowledge of the eighteenth-century's interpretation of it.

35. Cont. Bernard Rochot interprets Gassendi's standpoint in a less radical manner than does Sortais; of the two souls contained in man, the one, 'animal and mortal', the other, 'purely human and immortal', he writes: 'Le dualisme cartésien de la matière et de la pensée s'en trouve amorti, mais non supprimé' (in Pierre Gassendi 1592-1655, sa vie et son œuvre, published by the Centre international de Synthèse, Paris, 1955, p. 94). The tenor of the fifth Objections, however, surely undermines Rochot's interpretation.

36. Descartes, Oeuvres et Lettres (ed. cit), pp. 519-20, 'troisième scrupule'.

The problem of terminology is, perhaps, of the same nature. Is not Cyrano's use of the word 'raison', like his notion of man and beast, closer to Montaigne's and Charron's than to that of Descartes and the new philosophers? A comparison of its use in the Lettre contre les Sorciers with that in the Autre Monde will show whether Cyrano is consistent in his concept of the faculty.

In his epistolary diatribe against demonolatry Cyrano repeats the main arguments of Gabriel Naudé's Apologie pour tous les grands personnages qui ont esté faussement soupconnez de Magie, first published in Paris in 1625; but, whereas Naudé's method is encyclopaedic, Cyrano's is direct, pared, and linear, and his examples culled from contemporary experience. Cyrano's letter is far more modern in approach precisely because the context of it is not philosophical, but reported cases of diabolical magic to the ignorance and superstition of pragmatic. Both writers impute the peasantry, in short, to the human error induced by credulity. All great persons have been accused of magic, argues Naudé, and these false rumours have persisted owing to malice or ignorance. One reason for supporting such beliefs may well be to 'dompter ou polir l'esprit d'un Peuple rustic et grossier'.<sup>37</sup> Proffering an equally Machiavellian explanation, Cyrano explicitly states that such beliefs were fostered in the past when known to be false; of the Philosophers of Antiquity, he writes:

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37. — ed. cit., p. 193.

Ces anciens là, non plus que nous, n'ont pas toujours écrit ce qu'ils ont crû: souvent les Loix et la Religion de leur pays, les a contraints d'acommoder leurs preceptes à l'interest, et au besoin à la politique. C'est pourquoy on ne doit croire d'un homme que ce qui est humain, c'est à dire possible et ordinaire.<sup>38</sup>

While Naudé amasses erudite material from multifarious sources to present his case, Cyrano pleads his in exactly the same vein as that of the arguments he puts forward: his matter has a pragmatic basis and his criterion is the everyday one of what is likely and what is not. If there can be found a simple explanation of a reported phenomenon which conforms to past experience and to what we know to be natural, then why search after a more complex, supernatural one? Is it not more plausible that cases of purported daemonic possession are imputable to ignorance, credulity, old age, or to the flights of imagination of hysterical women, than to the intervention of the supernatural?<sup>39</sup>

The context of Cyrano's oft-quoted recourse to reason, envisaged as his 'queen', is close in content and terminology to sentiments expressed by the Socratic daemon and by the lunarians, as well as in the wider context of the letter as a whole, to the Toulousain episode which opens the Soleil. In both works, Cyrano conceives of sorcery always within a socio-religious framework; in this, as in its circumstantial curiosities, it is opposed to reason. In the letter we read,

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38. L., pp. 67-8.

39. L., pp. 68-75.

Non je ne croy point de Sorciers ....  
 et je ne deffere à l'autorité de  
 personne, si elle n'est accompagnée de  
 raison, ou si elle ne vient de Dieu.  
 Dieu qui tout seul doit estre crû de ce  
 qu'il dit, à cause qu'il le dit. Ny le  
 nom d'Aristote, plus sçavant que moy,  
 ny celuy de Platon, ny celuy de Socrate  
 ne me persuadent point si mon jugement  
 n'est convaincu par raison de ce qu'ils  
 disent: la raison seule est ma reyne,  
 à qui je donne volontairement les mains,  
 et puis je sçay par experiences que les  
 esprits les plus sublimes ont chopé le  
 plus lourdement; comme ils tombent de  
 plus haut, ils font de plus grandes  
 cheutes; enfin nos peres se sont trompez  
 jadis, leurs neveux se trompent maintenant;  
 les nostres se tromperont quelque jour;  
 n'embrassons donc point une opinion, à cause  
 que beaucoup la tiennent, ou parce que  
 c'est la pensée d'un grand Philosophe;  
 mais seulement à cause que nous voyons  
 plus d'apparence qu'il soit ainsi que  
 d'estre autrement. Pour moy je me moque  
 des Pedants qui n'ont point de plus forts  
 arguments pour prouver ce qu'ils disent,  
 sinon d'alleguer que c'est une maxime;  
 comme si leurs maximes étoient bien plus  
 certaines que leurs autres propositions.  
 Je les en croiray pourtant s'ils me montrent  
 une Philosophie, dont les principes ne  
 puissent estre revoquez en doute, desquels  
 toute la Nature soit d'accord, ou qui nous  
 ayent esté revelez d'enhaut, autrement je  
 m'en moque, car il est aisé de prouver tout  
 ce qu'on veut quand on ajuste les principes  
 aux opinions, et non pas les opinions aux  
 principes.<sup>40</sup>

Save for the fideism, all the main points contained here are repeated in the moon-trial episode in similar terms.<sup>41</sup> The cohesive factor here, as in the Autre Monde, is Cyrano's notion of man as free; it lies in an attitude rather than in a set of beliefs, so that the rejection of authority is radical in its

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40. L., p. 67.

41. A.M., p. 54: 'Ilz [les examineurs] m'interrogèrent ... de Philosophie; je leur exposé tout à la bonne foy ce que jadis mon Régent m'en avoit appris, mais ilz ne

implications. In this, it tends to embrace not only those schools of thought proved wrong, but all fixed credos. Thus, his philosopher, a man with an organic structure superior to that of the ordinary man, is distinguishable by his distance from the common herd, that is by his attitude to life, and, like Tristan, by his independent spirit: 'un philosophe doit juger le vulgaire, et non pas juger comme le vulgaire'.<sup>42</sup>

While his declaration in the letter against sorcerers reveals a preference for the certain, this is envisaged as nothing less than the principles of Nature; but she, as we have seen, works by immanent, dynamic impetus. Likewise, reason is a tool for sifting information according to what we know to be likely or plausible. If the birds and beasts in the Autre Monde think Dyrcona and man in general lack reason this is because his and their beliefs and behaviour lack any perceptible correlation with what is. Thus, stupidly, Dyrcona goes on believing in Aristotelian natural philosophy even when his own recent experience disproves it, and despite his predicament in the present. 'Reason', then, includes good sense, but does not include the ability necessarily to discern a single Truth, as

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41. Cont.... mirent guère à me le refuter ... J'allégué pour dernier refuge les principes d'Aristote... "Aristote, me dirent-ilz, accommodoit des principes à sa Philosophie, au lieu d'accommoder sa Philosophie aux principes. Encore ces principes les devoit-il prouver au moins plus raisonnables que ceux des autres Sectes..."; cf. also A.M., p.59: 's'il [Dyrcona] est homme ... puisque tout homme est libre, ne luy est-il pas libre de s'imaginer ce qu'il voudra? Quoy! pouvés-vous le contraindre à n'avoir que vos visions? ... Pour croire quelque chose, il fault qu'il se présente à son imagination certaines possibilités plus grandes au oüy qu'au non de cette chose.'

42. L., p. 68, ll. 83-4.

conceived by a Montaigne, a Pascal, or a Descartes. The plea for the right use of reason is tantamount to the plea to live to the full in the present, according to the data of the present.

The attitude of Cyrano in the letter is very close to that of Descartes in his Méthode, and this impression is borne out in the Lune, when the daemon explains why he now lives on the moon:

les hommes y sont amateurs de la vérité, ...  
on n'y voit point de Pedans, ... les  
Philosophes ne se laissent persuader qu'à  
la raison et ... l'autorité d'un scavant,  
ny le plus grand nombre, ne l'emportent point  
sur l'opinion d'un batteur en grange, si le  
batteur en grange raisonne aussy fortement.

The textual similarity is close to Descartes's pretension that

Ceux qui ont le raisonnement le plus fort,  
et digèrent le mieux leurs pènsées, afin de  
les rendre claires et intelligibles, peuvent  
toujours le mieux persuader ce qu'ils  
proposent, encore qu'ils ne parlissent que  
bas-breton, et qu'ils n'eussent jamais appris  
de Rhétorique.<sup>43</sup>

This notwithstanding, Cyrano's praise of reason is a far cry from the restricted understanding of the function of Reason of the new philosophers, namely, the application of mathematical propositions to physical data, in an effort to elucidate natural laws. There is no control system built into Cyrano's notion of what constitutes a right use of reason. The word is used as a stick with which to beat prejudice, cant, and stupidity.

Cyrano talks far more of the results of reasoning well than of reason and how it works, or should be conducted. For, he presents a vision of the world, not a philosophy. To reason

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43. A.M., p. 36; Discours de la Méthode, ed.cit., p.8.



is just one activity of the fiery world-soul; Cyrano does not, like Descartes, give preeminence to the mind. If anything, his praise of reason is diametrically opposed to the Cartesian position, in that Cyrano makes little or no evaluative distinction between the various forms of cognition. In short, if Cyrano's approach is modern, his purposes are other than those of the new philosophers. It is in the context of human mores that his anti-authoritarianism is most forcibly expressed; like the Libertins of the 1620s, Cyrano calls into question age-old, universally revered, social and political institutions, and the open way in which he does so is not only alien to the caution of Descartes in the third part of the Méthode, but is a far clearer statement than is to be found in the writings of a Naudé, a La Mothe le Vayer, or even of Théophile himself despite his persecution. It might well be argued that Cyrano manages to say, in his fiction, all that Théophile stood for but was prevented from saying. In the chapter which follows, I shall examine the nature of Cyrano's attack on the socio-political norms of his day.

## CHAPTER V

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

## i. The family.

If the lunarians revere youth at the expense of the aged, they do so, argues the daemon, with very good reason. Cyrano's disdain for the old is not merely another example of the use of the monde renversé technique, nor, as some critics have argued,<sup>1</sup> an example only of his projection of personal family conflicts on to the fictional level: the case presented for the condemnation of the traditionally accepted authority of the father coheres with the rest of Cyrano's thought in the Autre Monde. The daemon explains very forcefully and cogently the reasons for the preeminence of youth:

Vous savez que la jeunesse seule est propre à l'action: et si vous n'en estes pas tout à fait persuadés, dites-moy, je vous prie, quand vous respectés un homme courageux n'est-ce pas à cause qu'il vous peut venger de vos oppresseurs? Pourquoy donc le considérés-vous encore, si ce n'est par habitude, quand un bataillon de septante janviers a gelé son sang et tué de froid tous les nobles entousiasmes dont les jeunes personnes sont eschauffées pour la justice? Lors que vous defferez au plus fort, n'est-ce pas affin qu'il vous soit obligé d'une victoire que vous ne luy scauriés disputer? Pourquoy donc vous soumettre à luy, quand la paresse a fondu ses muscles, débilité ses artères, évaporé ses esprits, et succé la moesle de ses os?

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1. See, for example, F. Lachèvre, A.M., p.62, n.2; P. Brun, Savinien de Cyrano Bergerac, Paris, 1893, p.280; G. Mongrédien, Cyrano de Bergerac, Paris, p.174 - 'Il (Cyrano) a peuplé son royaume chimérique de la Lune de ses rêves de fils révolté'.

Si vous adoriés une femme, n'estoit-ce pas à cause de sa beauté? Pourquoi donc continuer vos genuflexions, après que la vieillesse en a faict un phantosme à menacer les vivans de la mort? Enfin, lors que vous honoriés un homme spirituel, c'estoit à cause que, par la vivacité de son génie, il pénétoit une affaire meslée et la desbrouilloit, qu'il deffrayoit par son bien dire l'assemblée du plus hault carat, qu'il digéroit les sciences d'une seule pensée et que jamais une belle Ame ne forma de plus violens désirs que pour luy ressembler, et cependant vous luy continués vos hommages quand ses organes usez rendent sa teste imbécille et pesante et lors qu'en compagnie il ressemble plustost par son silence la statue d'un Dieu-Foyer qu'un homme capable de raison.

Concluez par là, mon filz, qu'il vault mieux que les jeunes gens soient pourvus du gouvernement des familles que les vieillards.<sup>2</sup>

The first part of the daemon's speech would seem to echo the political credo of Corneille's Don Gomès, forcibly expressed in Act I, scene iii of Le Cid: in the world of war and politics past glories are of little use; action and expediency are all-important, honour is due to the man who saves his country and not to him who has saved it. Such an outlook is, of course, typical of the pre-Frondes generation. In two Discours first published in his Oeuvres diverses of 1644 in Paris, namely Le Romain and De la Gloire, Guez de Balzac presses home his conviction that the nobleman, born with vertu as well as noble blood, must give witness of his inner worthiness by deeds; his belief resembles that of Corneille's fictional heroes, say Horace or Polyeucte, that he who would lay claim to the possession of vertu must accept every challenge made upon

it in order to conserve the right to make the claim. Likewise, Descartes shows in all his writings on ethical questions an acute awareness of the importance of swift and effective action. His concept of 'fermeté d'âme', like his deliberations on the relevance and meaning of 'solid contentment' in the context of everyday moral decision-making, demonstrate his concern to bridge the possible gap between the expedient world of the present and that of absolute moral standards. In all these writers, speed of action is regarded as a primordial element in the evaluation of an individual's moral worth.<sup>3</sup>

There exists, however, a shift in emphasis between the belief that action is more important than mere words and the exhortation to realize one's potential - the premise behind the daemon's argument being just such a desire. For the daemon's conviction, like the Count's in Le Cid, is based on the belief that the older man cannot perform the deeds of which the younger one is capable; the suspicion that such a standpoint leaves no room for the riposte of a Don Diègue - that the experience of the past may be used to good effect in the present - is made explicit in the world of the Lune. By the very nature of his physics, Cyrano must, to be logical, and does, argue that the young man will invariably act out his potential while the older man will not be able to continue to perform all those acts of which he was formerly capable, for the simple reason that he is no longer of the same physical make-up as he had been in his youth.

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3. For a more detailed discussion of the relative nature of Descartes's and Cyrano's ethics, see below, chapter VI, pp. 341-3.

Cyrano's preoccupation with doing rather than with being is founded upon his concept of the universe: in a sense, being is doing. Ageing, by contrast, constitutes a diminishing of all one's faculties, intellectual as well as physical, since all are an expression of one's atomic formation. The so-called experience of the elderly man is of no more use than the faded beauty of the crone since there is just as much dissociation between his present and his former self as between her ugliness and her former beauty.

It is for all these reasons that lunarian fathers bow to their sons, as the daemon has explained:

Vous vous estonnés ... d'une coustume si contraire à celle de vostre pais? Elle ne répugne point, touttefois, à la droite raison, car en conscience, dites-moy, quand un homme jeune et chaud est en force d'imaginer, de juger et d'exécuter, n'est-il pas plus capable de gouverner une famille qu'un infirme sexagénaire? Ce pauvre hébété, dont la neige de soixante hivers a glacé l'imagination, se conduit sur l'exemple des heureux succès, et cependant c'est sa Fortune qui les a rendus tels, contre toutes les règles et toute l'économie de la prudence humaine.

Pour du jugement, il en a aussy peu, quoy que le vulgaire de vostre Monde en fasse un appanage de la vieillesse; et pour le désabuser, il fault qu'il sçache que ce qu'on appelle en un vieillard prudence n'est rien qu'une appréhension panicque, une peur enragée de rien entreprendre qui l'obsède: ainsy, mon fils, quand il n'a pas risqué un danger où un jeune homme s'est perdu, ce n'est pas qu'il en préjugeast la catastrophe, mais il n'avoit pas assez de feu pour allumer ces nobles esclans qui nous font oser, et l'audace, en ce jeune homme, estoit comme un gage de la réussite de son dessein, parce que cette ardeur qui faict

la promptitude et la facilité d'une  
 exécution estoit celle qui le poussoit  
 à l'entreprendre.<sup>4</sup>

Cyrano's explanation as to why the son should rule over the father is based upon what, for him, is an undisputed fact, that the young man's mind is hotter, and so more active and efficient an instrument, than the aged one. The consistency of his theories is well illustrated here, his proof of the superiority of the young mind as well as the body providing yet one more example of the promethean theme: Fire or heat equals activity, alias life; cold or lack of fire equals passivity. Fire initiates movement, coldness assures stability. Just as life slowly ebbs away, its particular manifestation in man - reasoning power - must diminish in like proportion. Conversely, the very existence of intense heat in the youth assures the success of his enterprises. The old man can no more make decisions on rational grounds than he can perform acts of physical prowess, since his reason is as deficient as his body; it is comparable, say, to asking a man without hands or legs to use such limbs.

Past experience cannot come to the rescue, for that, like the existence of heat within us or of the faculty of reason, was the result of chance, not judgement. Just as his very life ultimately stems from the chance formation of atoms into a composite body, so, too, each part of our lives is a prey to the vicissitudes of fortune. The 1657 text reveals this element

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4. A.M., p. 61.

in Cyrano's argument much more clearly than does either the Munich or Paris manuscript: In the latest text the 'infirm sixty-year old' 'ne se conduit que par ce que vous appelez l'expérience des heureux succès, qui ne sont cependant que de simples effets du hasard contre toutes les règles de l'économie de la prudence humaine.'<sup>5</sup> Once again the dissociation between past, present, and future in Cyrano's thinking has far-reaching consequences in his understanding of man. The young man's actions stem not from prudence, but from the ability to perform them; his acts and his decisions are immediate and are not the result of lessons learned from the past, or even from a perusal of the past. They are, and when reflected upon later are seen to have been, relevant to a particular point in time, namely, that moment at which they were made. But the old man or woman is, as we have seen, in a very real sense, not the same person as she or he was when young: the beautiful girl one fell in love with is quite dissociated from the old hag that she has become simply because she is no longer the young beauty; the formerly brilliant mind is of no relevance when we contemplate the man it had once belonged to now. Still worse, Cyrano's dismissal of experience suggests that the old man himself cannot now, with his deficient mental powers, make any use of the data appropriated by his former intellect; the two bear no more relationship to each other than the present ugliness and former beauty of an old woman. Cyrano would seem to assume that one has no access to past experience then, just as the ageing process

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5. 1657 edition, pp. 117-18.

can be so marked as to prevent recognition of former physical traits. For, continuity of experience makes no sense in a world understood as an eternal series of presents: each point in time stands valid as an entity, each is an equally true representation of what is (that is, Nature) and bears no necessary relationship to any other point in time (or present). Thus, it can be seen that Cyrano's belief in the element of chance in human life is as random as is the lunar academician's atomic theory: chance creation and chance as a central ingredient of living are theories dependent upon the same concept of the universe, and the same notion of time.

It follows that the traditional roles in the family of father and son, founded as they are solely on the acceptance of chronological progression, seem nonsensical in a vision of the world that discounts chronology. Both social and political groups, family and State, are a prey to changing fortune in the same way as are the individuals who comprize them, and their construction should take this into account. Still further, it is questionable how far the development of the human species, any more than of any other, has any meaning for Cyrano.

Experience does not constitute a serious factor in the development of the individual, neither is it ever brought into play as a factor to be considered in the development of man as a species. Contrary to A. Juppont's contention that Cyrano had prescience of the theory of evolution, Cyrano's notion of atomic 'creation', upon which Juppont based his opinion, is radically different from the hypotheses of a Lamarck.



or a Darwin.<sup>6</sup> Nowhere in the Autre Monde is there the formulation of the idea of progress in any one species's development; all change consists in a re-formation of decomposed matter: the question either of evolution or even of the continuation of the species as such is completely disregarded.

If we look again at the moon academician's theory of the atomic formation of organisms, we perceive that it is envisaged in an unprogressive way, in keeping with its non-hierarchical implications concerning the scale of being:

Vous ne sçavés pas que <sup>un</sup>cent million de fois cette Matière, s'acheminant au dessein d'un homme, s'est arrêtée à former tantost une pierre, tantost du plomb, tantost du corail, tantost une fleur, tantost une Comette, pour le trop ou trop peu de certaines figures qu'il falloit ou ne falloit pas à désigner un homme.<sup>7</sup>

Both diachronically and synchronically the scale of being is not a scale of values. While Cyrano eschews the traditional hierarchies, he remains bounden to a non-linear notion of time; in this, he is consistent, both attitudes having equally 'levelling' implications, but it is, likewise, this lack of historical perspective which distances him from a thinker such as Diderot, despite the otherwise great similarity in their depiction of Nature. In this particular, it is Cyrano's contemporary, Pascal, who has the more modern approach, every aspect of his thoughts on Nature and man's place in it presupposing an historical framework, or an evaluative one. It is clear in the passage just cited that the element of time, necessary to any theory of evolution, is not entertained. At any moment of a

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6. A.M., p. 77, n.4; Lachèvre also cites a similar opinion of P. Brun.

7. A.M., p.77.

non-finite extent of time atoms may congregate to form stone, lead, coral, flower, or comet rather than a man. In the same way, Cyrano's theory of the transposition of matter, which he terms 'metempsychosis', cuts across the idea of historical progression; he always presents us with an horizontal rather than a vertical account of reality. The only common feature that this conception has with transformism is the insistence on change itself, and on the fact that change of appearance is a change of structure; yet, it is precisely the radical nature of the change that makes continuity through change difficult to conceive.

The metamorphoses of the sun inhabitants are the most striking example of this discontinuity, for there is no logical sequence in their various self-expressions, or manifestations: their complete change in function, arrived at in the 'twinkling of an eye', is a change in structure. Each component of the miraculous tree is identified as a sun inhabitant, yet the only constant is its desiring, for it is this which determines its nature at any point in time. They are not a prey to the irreversibility that we have seen to be the mark of old age, for their very nature is fiery. In the solar regions, prophets can seize knowledge of the past as well as the future because of the luminosity of their environment: past, present, and future are but aspects of one reality, so that the prophet may work just as easily from cause to effect as from effect to cause. Though not explained in any more detail, one assumes that the principle behind this idea is the same as in Cyrano's general theory of matter and the formation of living organisms,

rather than in any assumption that the prophets utilise historical data, in a logical manner: the determinant of their powers is the same as that of the sun inhabitants, of the Socratic daemon, and of the philosopher in the solar regions, namely, intensity of heat or light, alias the fiery principle.<sup>8</sup>

The closest that Cyrano comes to an evolutionary explanation of change is Dyrcona's postulation of the emergence of new worlds and continents in his conversation with the viceroy of Canada, prior to his moon travels, and in a variant of the theory expounded by Dyrcona on his way to the sun.<sup>9</sup> If the universe is comprised of an infinite number of worlds centred round an infinite number of suns, as Dyrcona suggests, then, he argues, this is not such a difficult thing to believe, given that these suns must have attached to them combustible matter which their heat burns up; it is this waste matter which, having been consumed, is shed by the various suns to become worlds and continents: the discovery of America substantiates the hypothesis. When he sights the various planets on his journey to the sun-spot Dyrcona muses on the 'construction of this great universe', and imagines it to have been created out of chaos by the sympathetic conjoining of like bodies. This variant of the earlier hypothesis of the Lune is dissimilar from all other physical theories in the Autre Monde in that the creation of the world is posited; in the account of emergent worlds just referred

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8. Cf. A.M., p.132.

9. A.M., pp. 14-16; pp. 127-8.

to, at the beginning of the Lune, it is assumed that the universe is infinite in time as well as extent. Yet, here also, there is no regularity in the process nor any development in the nature of the new worlds over time. It is through 'un amour inconnu' that elements like air were formed, or that stars came to turn on their axis, aided by their spherical shape. The same principle of sympathy accounted for the movement of other bodies in their path as they moved along, such as the planets Mercury, Venus, the earth, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. In keeping with the earlier explanation, here, too, the planets are comprised of burnt out matter, namely extinct suns. The earth is still warm enough to be able to cause the moon to turn, and Jupiter to support its satellites. Particles of fire are continuously being emitted from suns to feed other, growing, bodies: perhaps the sun-spots are daily growing in size in this manner, he conjectures. Perhaps there did exist daemons on the earth, as well as angels, prior to the creation of the human species when the habitat was more congenially hot, with the earth's being a sun. This passage is close to the idea of progressive development fashioned by material conditions such as climate or geographical location, and it is for this central idea of emergent worlds dependent on these factors that the eighteenth-century writer, Benoît de Maillet, paid tribute to Cyrano in the preface to his Telliamed, first published in 1748 - a year before Diderot's Lettre sur les aveugles - in which work he exposes his own transformist speculations. However, Cyrano is still one, vital step away from a transformist theory, for there is no

sense of adaptive change in his notion of emergent worlds. When the earth became cold, surmises Dyrcona, probably in the time of Augustus, it is most likely that daemons journeyed to the sun; at that point, God probably created man, less perfect than daemons, but, by the same token, more suited to the then empty, and still colder earth. There is no adaptation or survival of the fittest: faced with an unsuitable climate, a creature moves to a more propitious one. Again, the theory of emergent worlds is not a linear but a circular one: atoms of fire are emitted from one globe, join another, and, in their turn, are emitted from this second one, and so on. Apart from the unique case in Cyrano's novels just cited, where the creation of man as well as of the universe is posited, there is no essential change in the universe overall, though all is in a constant state of flux. Usually, he posits the emergence of no new types of species or world. In this respect, the scale, or chain, remains constant eternally. Spatially and chronologically there remain a fixed number of types of body in a single universe in which all is in all.

It is, perhaps, a reflection of this a-historical appraisal of the world that prompts Cyrano to disregard chronological accuracy in his use of historical or legendary characters. Thus, for example, while Adam is still depicted as the original homo sapiens, the garden of Eden has been transported to the Moon and exists now, in Dyrcona's present; so too does the tree of knowledge. The deluge, on the other hand, had occurred in the past. The daemon bridges the gap between Antiquity and Dyrcona's present. Again, in the sun regions, the world of

Ovid's Metamorphoses, and, in particular, Dodona's grove, exists alongside Campanella's after-life on his sun, and Descartes's immediate past on earth. And so, while Cyrano appears to write very much within the same spirit as were to do the 'Modernists' in his refusal to defer to authority and tradition as in his preference for reason, he does not share their conviction that man has progressed over the ages. This is not, surely, accidental, for he does not merely seem to have no idea of evolution on the collective level, he actively combats all suggestions of the transmission of family traits on the personal one.

Even at the most elementary level, the notion of heredity is lacking in the Autre Monde. Family likenesses, for example, in physiognomy, are not only not considered but are not even recognised as such: if a child resembles the man who helped to procreate him, Cyrano, like Pomponazzi and Montaigne before him, fails to recognise the genetic connection, imputing the resemblance to the force of the future mother's imagination. Just as birds grow wings as a result of the intensity of their desire to fly to the bird kingdom, so, likewise, 'les femmes grosses ... produisent sur leurs enfants la figure des choses qu'elles ont desirées'.<sup>10</sup> Cyrano resorts to his favourite contingent moulding power - the imagination - when it would not have distanced him one jot from his theory of matter to have explained family likeness in family terms.

Though, it is true, the science of genetics did not

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10. A.M., p.148.

come into being until Mendel, it is not a convincing argument to excuse Cyrano on the grounds of his general ignorance of the subject. From Antiquity onwards the problem of how family traits are carried from generation to generation held as much interest for the philosopher as that of how and when the soul enters the body, and the attendant question of the moment at which the seed may be considered a personality in its own right. Every manual of philosophy and every apologetic written in seventeenth-century France treats of these questions. Of the Ancients, Lucretius makes a concerted effort to explain how it may happen that a child take after his grand-parents rather than directly after his parents. The solution he proposes - that the seed carries within it the imprint of the parents, grand-parents' traits recurring because some of their seed left dormant in their offspring is carried on into the grandchildren - clearly stems from his corpuscular physics, and bears a resemblance to his theory of sense perception.<sup>11</sup> If Cyrano ignores all such theories, this would seem to be as much on affective as philosophical grounds: two of the chief guardians of authority, the monarch and the nobleman perpetuate their power on hereditary grounds; by contrast, if Cyrano criticises the common herd, he does so because of the stupidity and lack of perception which, in practice, they manifest and not because they belong to the lowest rung in the social hierarchy. In the same way, the philosopher is defined by the exceptional corpuscular organisation of his brain, and not by a role that he plays in society. As

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11. See his De Natura Rerum, Bk. IV, ll. 1209-59.

we have seen, it is by the same criteria that the youth, or son, is esteemed more than the old man, or father.

Cyrano is consistent in dismissing all the usual claims of parents over their offspring. Indeed, it is immediately after the daemon has been describing the family hierarchy in the moon that the academician expounds the corpuscular theory of the formation of organisms and of sense perception. Anxious to emphasize the accidental nature of family ties, the daemon has recourse to a theory of the origin of the soul which appears to run counter to the contention, made throughout the Autre Monde, that the body's material structure determines the nature of the expression of the soul which enlivens it. The speech, usually interpreted as a diatribe against the fifth commandment, has as its premise the idea that the individual soul precedes in existence the body that it informs:

Vous ne tenez, ô mon filz, que le corps de  
vostre Architecte mortel, vostre Ame part  
des Cieux, qu'il pouvoit engaisner aussy  
bien dans un autre fourreau; vostre père  
seroit possible né vostre filz, comme vous  
estes né le sien. Que sçavés-vous mesme  
s'il ne vous a point empêché d'hériter d'un  
diadesme? Vostre esprit estoit peut-estre  
party du Ciel à dessein d'animer le Roy des  
Romains au ventre de l'Impératrice; en chemin,  
par hazard, il rencontra vostre embrion pour  
abréger son voyage, il s'y logea. Non, non,  
Dieu ne vous eust point rayé du calcul qu'il  
avoit faict des hommes quand vostre père fut  
mort petit garçon.<sup>12</sup>

The daemon does not stipulate the nature of this heaven-inspired soul, but it may well be fiery, in which case this passage

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12. A.M., p. 64.



coheres with the notion of the fiery world-soul, or of the sun itself as that soul, as is postulated in the Soleil, particles of matter from the sun being shed throughout the world to provide souls for the organisms of other globes.<sup>13</sup> It is in keeping also with the daemon's account of the transposition of matter up the scale of being by assimilation and with the young moon philosopher's rejection of personal immortality, for it would seem to presuppose, like these other theories, something akin to the Averroan concept of the universal intellect, a concept inherited by the sixteenth-century Italian Naturalists, mainly through Padua.

All human beings then, like all species, derive from a single source and principle. It is for their despicable qualities that the peasantry and populace are decried, not their social status; the philosopher is he who is discovered to be de facto a person who thinks and acts well, not someone to whom the title has been attributed as a result of the approval of some human institution. As Mersenne had realized, servants and masters are distinguishable solely by accident of birth, if we accept the doctrine of the world-soul.<sup>14</sup> Cyrano's attitude to the family unit reflects this consequence of the doctrine with its implied levelling of social strata; the same consequence is perceptible in the sun-birds' satire on the traditional understanding of the monarchy. We now see the extent to which his physical

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13. Cf. A.M., p. 175.

14. See his Impiété des Déistes, Paris, 1624, II, pp. 402 and 419, referred to by J.S. Spink in French Free-thought from Gassendi to Voltaire, London, 1960, p. 245.

theories provide a basis for his satire and its attendant moral evaluations. Cyrano's insistence upon viewing the family a-chronologically is integrally linked with his anti-anthropocentrism and anti-authoritarianism through his vision of the physical universe as a series of dissociated and contingent presents (in this, universe and each individual life resemble each other). There can be no debt owed for the inheritance of parental qualities, since any apparent resemblance between father and son, it is suggested, is fortuitous. Gratitude is out of place. In any case, even were we to accept such a link,

un présent perd son mérite lorsqu'il est  
faict sans le choix de celui qui le reçoit  
... Vostre père consulta-t-il vostre  
volonté lors qu'il embrassa vostre mère?  
Vous demanda-t-il si vous trouveriés bon de  
veoir ce siècle-là, ou d'en attendre un  
autre? si vous vous contenteriés d'estre  
le filz d'un sot, ou si vous auriés  
l'ambition de sortir d'un brave homme?  
Hélas! vous que l'affaire concernoit tout  
seul, vous estiez le seul dont on ne  
prenoit point l'avis!<sup>15</sup>

The individual, a little cosmos, is perceived as its own centre of energy, at all times independent of the parents by whose mating his procreation was assured. While each man is responsible for his conduct in the present, by the same token, he cannot be grateful to another for his 'birth' since he played no active part in it; that is to say, he was allowed no choice in the matter. His parentage, as the time of his birth, is as much the result of chance as is the coming into being of any living organism through the random agglomeration of atoms in space. Birth, then, represents merely a point in time, which,

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15. A.M., p. 64.

now past, has no more significance than any other past action or state. The idea that the soul preexists birth adds force to this.

Of course, Cyrano does accept the obvious - that there is a chain of generations which, by definition, link together to form what we term the 'family', but even here he attenuates the fact by viewing the family succession from the distance of the collective reality. It is Nature that gives birth through the intermediary of the parent's body (though the emphasis throughout this episode is placed on the male lineage):

Vous me répliquerez que sans luy [votre père] vous ne seriez pas, il est vray, mais aussy luy-mesme sans vostre grand-père n'auroit jamais esté, ni vostre grand-père sans vostre bisaieul, ni, sans vous, vostre père n'auroit pas de petit-fils.

Lors que la Nature le mit au jour, c'estoit à condition de rendre ce qu'elle luy prestoit; ainsy quand il vous engendra, il ne vous donna rien, il s'acquitta! Encore je voudrois bien scavoir si vos parens songeoient à vous quand ilz vous firent?<sup>16</sup>

This is the closest that Cyrano comes to acknowledging family ties; such continuity as there is between generations results from an unconscious, necessarily self-perpetuating natural process; it is automatically assured and there is nothing peculiarly human about it. There is no good reason other than presumably social proximity for a sense of family unity or affection. In the last passage cited, as in the account in

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16. A.M., p. 63.

the Soleil of the prophets's perceptions, time is reversible: to undermine the claim of the naturalness of the child's obedience to its parents, Cyrano almost conceives of cause and effect as progressing just as naturally from future to past as from past to future.

Nowhere does Cyrano lend importance to the idea of vertical progression in creation. Far from believing in the fixity of species, he makes no attempt to explain why the various types of organism should remain in their separate compartments even from one generation to the next, why a woman should invariably produce human offspring, a dog a puppy, a plant another plant of the same variety. Neither the theory of the three 'coctions' nor that of atomic creation takes account of the fact that the propagation of any one species depends uniquely on the members of that species. Cyrano emphasizes the variety of which Nature is capable; order lies not in the continuity over time of any given genus, species, or variety of living being, but in the chain as a whole, a timeless constant, perceived as a series of delineating marks in an ever-changing actuality. Nevertheless, even when attention is being focussed upon the possibility of crossing over the barriers of species, this only really occurs after death, so that, in practice, Cyrano safeguards the differentiation between different types of creature. Yet, at no time does he show why or how it is that there exists this clear point of separation between one species and the next on the scale; in an universe of infinite numbers,

if not shapes, of atoms, one would not necessarily expect a hard and fast line between say, an oak tree and a man, as Cyrano maintains, but rather, a very gradual and almost imperceptible shift from one species to the next, and, even, from one rung on the ladder of creation to the two proximate to it. Indeed, this alternative expectation is realized a hundred years' later in the hypotheses of Diderot.

In many respects, in his concept of Nature and of man's place in it, Diderot seems to be the natural successor of a writer such as Cyrano: for him, also, all is materially determined, each type of organism being the result of chance formation; Nature is sentient in all her parts. His philosophy is essentially monistic. As for Cyrano, so for Diderot, all is in all, for all is in a constant state of flux; as in Cyrano's imagination, so, in Diderot's, the universe is comprized of worlds in worlds. Diderot, however, lays far more radical importance on the plenitude principle: to be truly continuous, the chain of species must admit of hybrids, monsters, and 'incomplete' specimens of a future type of organism, as he explains in his Rêve de d'Alembert (written in 1769):

L'homme n'est qu'un effet commun, le monstre qu'un effet rare; tous les deux également naturels, également nécessaires, également dans l'ordre universel et général.... Tous les êtres circulent les uns dans les autres, par conséquent toutes les espèces... tout est un flux perpétuel... Tout animal est plus ou moins homme; tout minéral est plus ou moins plante; toute plante est plus ou moins animal. Il n'y a rien de précis en nature.<sup>17</sup>

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17. Oeuvres philosophiques de Diderot, Paris, 1964 (Garnier éd.), pp. 310-11.

Already, in the Lettre sur les aveugles, Diderot had envisaged the formation of species over a period of time; in his opinion, the species we now recognize were not always so perfect as they now are:

Je puis vous demander, par exemple, qui vous a dit .... que dans les premiers instants de la formation des animaux, les uns n'étaient pas sans tête et les autres sans pieds? Je puis vous soutenir que ceux-ci n'avaient point d'estomac, et ceux-là point d'intestins; que tels à qui un estomac, un palais et des dents semblaient promettre de la durée, ont cessé par quelque vice du coeur ou des poumons; que les monstres se sont anéantis successivement; que toutes les combinaisons vicieuses de la matière ont disparu, et qu'il n'est resté que celles où le mécanisme n'impliquait aucune contradiction importante et qui pouvaient subsister par elles-mêmes et se perpétuer.<sup>18</sup>

For Diderot, Nature makes no leaps: the natural selection that has taken place over the ages is still operative, and the proof of this is to be seen precisely in the existence of monstrous creatures and hybrids.

Cyrano does, it is true, weave stories around the theme of the monstrous, but does so very much in the spirit of Ovid, and within, once again, a non-sequential context. There is a link between all the hybrid matings that he describes in the episode of the trees of Pylades and Orestes, namely, the conjoined seeds of the remains of the two warriors. Iron and the magnet do become formed out of the ashes of the two trees; but, the story serves to illustrate the divers forms and the

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18. Ibid., pp. 121-2.

force of love, manifest in the heat of the various characters' desiring. More specifically in the three coctions story, the sun-spot man explains how the relative intensity of heat and cold plus the duration of gestation determines the nature of the organism to be formed; the number of 'coctions' determine whether it will be vegetative, sensitive, or rational, the number of months of its formation, its species. While he goes to great trouble to explain how, if nine months is the most 'perfect' length of gestation, the horse requires ten to fourteen, he does not talk of the monstrous.<sup>19</sup> This is touched on, however, in the next main episode, when, in keeping with this episode, and the story of Pylades and Orestes subsequent to both of them, the sun inhabitants' king explains how it may come about that a woman beget monstrous offspring:

Enfin plusieurs femmes grosses qui ont fait  
 Monstres leurs enfans déjà formez dans la  
 matrice, parce que leur imagination, qui  
 n'estoit pas assez forte pour se donner à  
 elles-mesmes la figure des Monstres qu'elles  
 concevoient, l'estoit assez pour arranger  
 la matière du fœtus, beaucoup plus chaude  
 et plus mobile que la leur, dans l'ordre  
 essentiel à la production de ces Monstres.<sup>20</sup>

In all these episodes heat-intensity accounts for the existence of imperfect specimens of any species or of cross-breeds; here, as in the Autre Monde as a whole, Cyrano emphasizes the exceptional nature of the hybrid, and the fact that it is miraculous though natural. His theories assume that genuses, species,

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19. A.M., pp. 168-76; pp. 130-32.

20. A.M., p. 146.

and varieties are distinct, and that the hybrid is the exception that proves the rule.

This acceptance of traditional categories also occurs in Cyrano's satire on human institutions: thus, he reverses the roles of father and son, king and subject, rather than throwing these distinctions out altogether; only in his condemnation of warfare is the satire radical enough to dismiss the occupation completely. He suggests neither a 'commune'-type human group, nor even a republic. He questions all the accepted systems within the terms of those systems: in how far this is a formal, stylistic matter, or an essential aspect of his thought, I shall try to elucidate in chapter VIII below. In any case, it is clear that Cyrano's consistently spelled out lesson is that all types of life are equally valid as expressions of Life - or Nature - and require of man an equal reverence. Thus, for him, the central issue is not whether Nature makes leaps, or whether she progresses, but that men should adopt the right attitude towards her various parts. Thus, man loses his privileged position in the universe, while yet remaining unrivalled as homo sapiens. It is Cyrano's notion of how a man should live that separates him from his orthodox contemporaries, and not <sup>merely</sup> his opinion as to what man prizes.

Cyrano's political theory follows closely the pattern of his thought on the family, since both his social and political ideas are shaped by his belief that Nature is one whole which embraces all time and all expressions of life as well as infinite space. It being essentially non-hierarchical and timeless,



there is no room left for customs and rules of conduct or attitudes based on tradition or authority, for these involve reverence for the past as well as for those deemed to be its custodians. Recourse to reason does not.

Ideally, recourse to reason would dictate all men's actions collectively as well as individually, but that very faculty renders irrelevant the authority normally afforded custom or habit, which provides the foundation-stone of most socio-political structures in practice. Is this, perhaps, the reason why Cyrano's political ideas have appeared to most critics of them as impractical as his endeavours to destroy the time-honoured family unit?

ii. The State.

In two panegyrics dedicated to Louis XIII and published in 1631, François de Cauvigny, Seigneur de Coulomby, a King's Counsellor, expounds all the orthodox arguments in support of monarchy.<sup>21</sup> For him, 'l'autorité Royale est d'institution Divine, et de mesme datte que le monde'. It is no accident if men have concerning kings 'une certaine impression ... que leur puissance est inviolable, et qu'ils sont les vives images de Dieu'; for the role of kings on earth parallels the relationship of God to his subjects: 'Dieu seul est Juge des Rois,

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21. In De l'autorité des roys and Discours panegyrique au roy, both published in Paris, and containing the same set of ideas in each. The author's name is listed in the catalogue of the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, as 'F. de Colomby'.

comme les Rois sont juges des hommes'. God is to kings as kings are to men.<sup>22</sup>

Government by one man is as natural as the institution of the family; that hierarchical natural order in the universe that orthodox thinkers believed they could perceive, and which they exemplified in the scale of being, is seen to be repeated in human affairs:

Depuis les plus basses jusques aux plus hautes [choses], on remarque des degrés d'obeissance et de superiorité. Dieu commande aux Anges, les Anges aux hommes, les hommes aux animaux, certaines especes sur d'autres especes, comme les Aigles aux Oiseaux, les Lyons aux bestes: et derechef entre les Aigles et les Lyons ceux qui sont les plus puissants. Davantage, nous voyons encore que les animaux les plus ingenieux, et les plus sociables ont quelque forme de Monarchie. Les membres du corps humain ne sont conduicts que par un Chef. Les puissances de l'ame ne sont regies que par un seul entendement, qui comme Prince absolu commande à nos passions. Le respect de son empire n'est pas si tost violé par les appetits dereglez, qu'ils excitent incontinent dans nos ames, des seditions et des tumultes qui troublent toute nostre felicité. Que s'il est vray qu'il y ait un parfait rapport entre le tout et ses parties, nous devons croire qu'il est aussi naturel aux Estats d'avoir des Rois, qu'aux familles dont les Estats sont composez, d'avoir des Chefs. ... Tous les hommes ne sont pas faicts de mesme nature... les uns ont esté produits pour obeir, les autres pour commander.<sup>23</sup>

That Cyrano is fully cognizant of these orthodox political preconceptions is clear from his Lettre contre les frondeurs, a defence of Mazarin. Here, too, the analogy

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22. De l'autorité des roys, p. 13; p.10; Dédicace.

23. Ibid., pp. 4-5.

between the function of God vis à vis men, and that of king or father vis à vis the populace and the family respectively, provides the foundation of his case. Just as the power of the monarch stems directly from God, argues Cyrano, so, that of the prime minister stems from the monarch; to criticize either is to enter the ranks of 'des seditieux qui cherchent par tout un pretexte de refuser l'obeïssance qu'ils doivent à ceux que le Ciel leur a donnés pour Maistres'. The customary practice of criticizing the king's minister rather than the king himself is, therefore, inexcusable:

celuy de Paris a bien eu la temerité de lever ses mains sur l'Oint du Seigneur, alleguant pour pretexte, que ce n'est pas au Roy qu'il s'attaque, mais à son favory; comme si de mesme qu'un Prince est l'image de Dieu, un Favory n'estoit pas l'image du Prince.<sup>24</sup>

All power stems from God, the monarch being the chief recipient of that power on earth and the means by which it is bestowed, or not, upon others; as such, the monarch is the rightful head of his submissive and obedient subjects. Likewise, in every family the father occupies a similarly authoritarian position. Within this theistic context, monarchy is the only acceptable form of government and, in this, the State takes its lead from the papacy. Seen in this light, the

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24, L., p.178; p.184: cf. Colomby, De l'autorité des roys, p.12, who supports his contention on the authority of St. Paul's epistles that 'il faut obeïr aux Princes comme à Dieu, combien qu'ils fussent fascheux; et aux Magistrats inferieurs, comme aux Princes mesmes; qu'il ne les faut point tant respecter pour crainte de les fascher, que de peur d'offenser Dieu'.

frondeurs cannot but be condemned out of hand, for to upset this social stratification is to upset the natural order:

Est-ce une faute pardonnable, de se rebeller contre son Roy, l'Image vivante de Dieu; tourner ses armes contre celui qu'il nous a donné pour exercer et sur nos biens et sur nos vies, les fonctions de sa toute Puissance? N'est-ce pas accuser d'erreur la Majesté Divine, de contrôler les volontés du Maître qu'elle nous a choisi? .... Comme Dieu n'est qu'un à dominer tout l'Univers, et ... comme le Gouvernement du Royaume Celeste est monarchique, celui de la Terre le doit être aussi. La sainte Ecriture fait foy que Dieu n'a jamais ordonné un seul état populaire .... il a voulu que nos Roys fussent sacrez, afin de les distinguer par un caractère surnaturel de tous ceux qui naistroient pour leur obeir. L'Eglise militante, qui est l'Image de la triomphante, est conduite monarchiquement par les Papes; et nous voyons que jusqu'aux maisons particulieres, il faut qu'elles soient gouvernées par une espece de Roy, qui est le Pere de famille; c'est comme un premier ressort dans la société, qui met nos actions avec ordre; et c'est cet instinct secret, qui necessite tout le monde à se soumettre aux Roys. Le peuple a beau tascher d'esteindre en son ame cette lumiere qui le guide à la soumission; il est à la fin emporté malgré luy par la force de ce premier mobile, et contraint de rendre l'obeissance qu'il doit.<sup>25</sup>

Whether or not the Lettre contre les frondeurs reflects at all the personal opinion of Cyrano - a question which I shall entertain from a circumstantial angle a little later in this chapter - or whether he wrote the letter primarily for money, there is no doubt that, with the lone exception of the retention in the birds' kingdom of a monarch, every one of the arguments just resumed from the letter is gainsaid in the Autre Monde. Indeed, kingship itself, as understood by the sun-birds, is

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25. L., pp. 183-4.

the exact converse of the orthodox concept of it.

Just as in the Moon the father has been reduced to the subordinate rank, so, in the Sun, the King is beholden to his 'subjects'. Upon them depends his right to rule and his well-being; for the king is deprived of the two sources of authority normally enjoyed by the French monarchy, birthright and the right of force. Given that the birds acknowledge no ultimate arbiter such as a Christian God, such claims to obedience as are accepted as natural by Coulomby or the 'orthodox' Cyrano of the Lettre contre les frondeurs lose all value. The Cyrano of the Autre Monde provides no substitute for the absolute judge and father-figure of the Christian religion: the Sun as world-soul takes on only the promethean role of the divinity, and not the protective one.

The contemporary, stratified State system had been reproduced in the Moon: there the king's rule was consolidated by priest and judge, and Cyrano is content to underline the stupidity and injustice of their prejudices and preconceptions, which they foist onto a populace over whom they have absolute power. In the Sun, the birds scoff at such a regime, though they too prove to be just as prejudiced in their actual judgments as the Selenian rulers. The birds understand Dyrcona's assumption that the eagle is their King, find this typical of the human race, and despise Man for it; the magpie explains their reasons:

Pensiez-vous donc, me dit-elle, que ce grand Aigle fut notre Souverain? C'est une imagination de vous autres Hommes, qui, à cause que vous laissez commander aux plus grands, aux plus forts et aux plus cruels de vos compagnons,

avez sotement crû, jugeant de toutes choses par vous, que l'Aigle nous devoit commander.

Mais nostre politique est bien autre; car nous ne choisissons pour nos Roys que les plus foibles, les plus doux et les plus pacifiques; encor les changeons-nous tous les six mois, et nous les prenons foibles, afin que le moindre à qui ils auroient fait quelque tort se pût venger de luy. Nous les choisissons doux, afin qu'il ne haïsse ny ne se fasse haïr de personne; et nous voulons qu'il soit d'une humeur pacifique pour éviter la guerre, le canal de toutes les injustices.<sup>26</sup>

Far from endowing their king with power, the birds have ensured that he will act as little more than a figurehead. Elected, not born to reign, chosen for his very lack of all those qualities normally required in a leader, the monarch assures, by his very powerlessness, a peaceful existence for his fellow-birds. The tyranny of the all-powerful monarch is replaced by an - almost - all-powerful electorate:

Chaque semaine il [le roi] tient les Estats où tout le monde est receu à se plaindre de luy. S'il se rencontre seulement trois oiseaux mal satisfaits de son gouvernement, il en est dépossédé, et l'on procède à une nouvelle élection.<sup>27</sup>

The birds do not, however, make the mistake of merely replacing the evils of monarchical government by those of a wholly democratic one:<sup>28</sup> the electorate does not possess the purely

26. A.M., pp. 155-6.

27. A.M., p. 156.

28. Here, and throughout the thesis, unless otherwise stated, I have used the term 'democracy' in the meaning given it by Plato in the eighth book of the Republic, that is, where each man is completely free and all have an equal right to freedom. In such a situation, argues Plato, the threat of anarchy naturally leads to the desire for a tyranny.

arbitrary powers afforded human Kings. While the bird-King literally has his feet and wings bound during the passing of parliamentary laws and decisions, becoming a potential victim of his citizens should they disagree with him, they, in their turn, must uphold their accusation convincingly and with good reason; otherwise they suffer a worse fate than the king they seek to depose: the unjust or unreasonable King is afforded the same dubious justice as the Medieval witch, being put to the test by ducking; the unjust citizen is assured of capital punishment.<sup>29</sup>

All critics, to date, have approached Cyrano's description of the bird Kingdom from a purely political standpoint, concluding, though with diverse degrees of insistence and various provisos, that it is unviable as a political system. At one end of the critical scale Brun, for whom the bird episode is merely one more example of Cyrano's 'monde à rebours' technique, considers this as all the worse an extravaganza for, in his opinion, having belied Cyrano's real political beliefs (presumably those expressed in the Mazarinades).<sup>30</sup> At the other, Howard Harvey sees the bird kingdom as something of a blue-print for a socio-political regime which is truly 'democratic', though even he doubts whether it would succeed,

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29. A.M., p. 156.

30. Op.cit., p. 280: 'Notre auteur était, nous le savons, grand partisan du gouvernement fort et de la monarchie absolue, grand avocat de la hiérarchie sociale et des castes bien tranchées, et il a sacrifié toutes ses idées politiques' [to the monde à rebours satirical method].

if implemented, in realizing all the aspirations that he - Harvey - perceives behind it.<sup>31</sup> Erica Harth would seem to represent most nearly the consensus, when she states that, 'not only is there an absence of any systematized political thinking in Cyrano's work; his satire remains very general, rendering it impossible to give any special stamp to his ideas on Government'.<sup>32</sup> Such a weight of opinion against lending importance to Cyrano as a political thinker is impressive. Yet, given the space allotted by Cyrano himself to political satire in his novels, and given the repetition of certain basic themes and viewpoints from Lune to Soleil, it seems a little ill-advised to dismiss his ideas summarily, without further investigation. If it is true that his political thought does not lend itself to practical application, then why is this so? Indeed, to what extent is the opinion that it does not justified? Perhaps critics have tended to bring to bear upon Cyrano's thought their own political preconceptions or ideologies, instead of viewing it within the context of the author's vision of the world? How does Cyrano's satire relate to the political theory of his day? Is his purpose perhaps, in any case, wider or other than the purely political?

Firstly, as a preliminary, we must clear the critical ground, and to do so, we must substantiate our claim that Cyrano's own ideas are more apparent in the Autre Monde than

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31. See his article on 'Cyrano de Bergerac and the question of human liberties' in Symposium, vol. IV, no.1 (May 1950), pp. 120-30.

32. In her Cyrano de Bergerac and the Polemics of Modernity, New York, 1970, p. 192.



in the Mazarinades; for at least two critics, Brun and Erica Harth, have considered both sets of writings to represent Cyrano's political theory. It is on this basis that Brun dismisses the satire of the Autre Monde, as far as one may judge, and it is certainly on this basis also, at least in part, that Erica Harth discovers little cohesion in Cyrano's politics; for she gives equal importance to both. However, is it not, perhaps, confusing to do this? Firstly, the authorship of the Mazarinades is not, in every case, certain.<sup>33</sup> Secondly, by their very nature polemical writings, they are subject to the vicissitudes of time, money and fortune, and in their shifting viewpoints would seem to reflect shifting loyalties rather than transitory political convictions or theories. Thirdly, far from being written at a different time from the Autre Monde, the Mazarinades straddle roughly the same period as the composition and revision of the two halves of the Autre Monde, if anything the novels representing a longer span than the polemical writings; however, whereas the theories and viewpoints change in the Mazarinades, there is in the Lune and Soleil a striking similarity of views: the convictions of the second work are exactly the same as those of the first. Lastly, the Lettre contre les frondeurs is the exception among the Mazarinades as well as containing

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33. SEE ibid., pp. 198-201: Erica Harth tends to accept Lachèvre's contention that all the eight Mazarinades which he publishes in Cyrano de Bergerac, Œuvres libertines, Paris, 1921, II, pp. 235-89, are indeed the work of Cyrano; she discusses in some detail the discrepancies between these and the political theory of the Autre Monde on pages 201 to 208 of her book.

sets of ideas alien to those of the Autre Monde, and, in addition, was very probably seen by Cyrano himself to be of transitory worth. It is the only polemic attributed to him to defend Mazarin. In the first edition of the Letters, at the head of the letter in question, there is made something of an apology for the extremist political position adopted in it:

Le Lecteur doit estre adverty, que cette Lettre fut envoyée pendant le Siege de Paris, et durant la plus violente animosité des Peuples contre Monseigneur le Cardinal: on ne s'étonnera donc pas d'y voir des choses un peu moins ajustées à l'estat present des Affaires, qui ont beaucoup changé depuis ce temps-là.<sup>34</sup>

Whether written by Cyrano or his editor, this note suggests that the views expressed in the letter are expedient, atypical, or, at the very least, representative of a short-spanned conviction. On all these grounds, there would seem to be a good case for questioning the relevance to an examination of Cyrano's own political ideas of the Mazarinades attributed to him.

As against this, new light is thrown on the political import of the Mazarinades, and, in particular, on the date of composition of the Lettre contre les frondeurs, in a recent article,<sup>35</sup> in which Ann Marsak re-questions the premises on which judgement of these writings has hitherto been based. Lachèvre

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34. L., p. 175.

35. See Ann Marsak, 'Cyrano de Bergerac and the Fronde: a question of date' in French Studies, Jan. 1974, pp. 12-20.

had dated the composition of the letter as 1649 because of the mention of the 'siege of Paris' in the note of the first edition, and this despite the fact that Cyrano refers to the events of that year specifically at the end of the letter as well in the past. Yet, there is surely a much simpler explanation than that of dishonesty, proffered by Lachèvre, since there was a second siege of Paris in 1652. Is this not a more likely date of composition?

If Dr. Marsak's theory is correct, then the letter was composed two years' subsequent to the probable date of composition of the earliest version of the Soleil, four years later than the end-date of composition of the Lune, but a year previous to the probable period of revision of the first novel. If we accept my earlier suggestion that Cyrano was responsible for part, if not all, of the revisions of the Lune, and if we surmise that he was responsible for the note at the head of the published letter, then we notice the same acute awareness of political circumstance in both the revised version of the Lune and in the letter-head. The reference of both manuscript copies of the Lune to the thirty years' war, and, in particular, the oblique reference to the Spanish Hapsburgs and Philip IV on the one hand, and to the French and their monarch on the other, is removed in the 1657 edition.<sup>36</sup> Presumably, this material is removed because it is no longer topical, nor, indeed, sufficiently circumspect for the political atmosphere of the mid-sixteen-fifties. The note prefacing the letter

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36. A.M., p. 56.

accounts for the particular nature of the sentiments expressed in it on much the same grounds, though here one can quite appreciate that the literary merits of the letter make it worth publishing notwithstanding.

Ann Marsak's study is relevant here also, for she points out that the disparate nature of the views expressed in the letter may not be imputable only to political expediency, but rather to long-term attitudes brought to bear on specific circumstances. She argues that, given the nature of each of the Frondes, and the changing role of the populace in them, Cyrano's reactions to them, as his political convictions in his other works, are consistent. If we accept that, during the Fronde parlementaire the people were allied to the cause of the Parlementaires, whereas, during the Jeune Fronde they were seen as a potentially disruptive and revolutionary force, and, in this, totally at variance with Bourgeois ideals (and, also, of course, noble ones), then both Mazarin and the people <sup>respectively</sup> represent diametrically opposed political concepts in the first as against the second period of the civil wars. Thus, argues Dr. Marsak, when, in the Mazarinades - all, apart from the letter, written prior to the treaty of Rueil - Cyrano supports the people, 'he meant everyone outside the first and second estates', whereas, 'the bourgeoisie and the people were no longer together in the Fronde of 1652'. 'Mazarin, however much disliked by the bourgeoisie, became preferable to rioters or radicals.'<sup>37</sup> Her thesis is supported by the circumstantial evidence of the two novels in that, in both, intolerance and violence are decried.

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37. Op. cit., p.17.

Whereas in 1649 Mazarin is seen as personifying the first and as being the cause of the second, in 1652 the populace have taken over both these roles. In support of this plea for the consistency of Cyrano's political utterances, one should add that, as Dr. Harth has pointed out,<sup>38</sup> despite the discrepancies in his multifarious political writings, Cyrano never advocates any form of government other than one headed by a king; it is tyranny that he finds antipathetic, not monarchy. Again, one might add to this that, in the Mazarinades (other than the letter) it is the bad king's counsellor who is vilified, all the opprobrium falling on the Cardinal; this is, of course, not an uncommon expedient - one cannot be sure to what extent the prime minister is genuinely being blamed for his acts, or whether the bad policies of the monarch are being attacked through the scapegoat of the minister. Here too, however, there is, in any case, a meeting-point between these polemical pamphlets, the Lettre contre les frondeurs, and Cyrano's political theory in his literary works: the importance of a good king, advised by an equally good minister or counsellor, is a message which is inherent in all these writings. Séjanus also, in the Mort d'Agrippine, regards the emperor as a tyrant, in the main, because he does not reward him according to this subject's own notion of his worth; in other words, Séjanus, like Agrippine, thinks he would be a better ruler than Tiberius.<sup>39</sup>

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38. Op. cit., pp. 207-8.

39. See La Mort d'Agrippine, II, iv.

He purports to be willing to change Rome into a republic if needs be in order to accede to its leadership; in this sense, it is, perhaps, not so much the nomenclature (monarchy or republic) that matters so much as the concepts that these terms convey in a given context in the various parts of Cyrano's work. In effect, throughout, one man rules, but does not, ideally, do so without recourse to the advice of those he governs.

One of the basic questions raised by the treatment of Cyrano's political writings by critics is whether we should assume, as most of them seem to, any link between his theories and the possibility of enacting them. Professor Howard Harvey is of all critics the one who affords serious consideration of Cyrano's social and political system as a viable form of government. As the title of his article shows - namely, 'Cyrano de Bergerac and the question of human liberties', for Professor Harvey the cohesive factor in Cyrano's socio-political thought is the plea for the freedom of the individual, and it is this wish to afford freedom that he equates with the democratic ideal. However, despite his preliminary examination of the concept of freedom in the thought of the Ancients and in that of Descartes and Gassendi, the body of the article leads one to wonder whether Professor Harvey is not unconsciously influenced also by twentieth-century, post-second-world-war, North-american preconceptions; and, perhaps, post-Freudian ones too. The freedom that he perceives in Cyrano's work, and which he sees as representative of the democratic ideal, reminds one of the psychologist's notion of freedom, for, says Howard

Harvey, it consists in 'freedom from fear'. On the collective level, he argues, 'the bird parliament is a clear statement of the democratic ideal, that is, a political system free from sociological compromise, from the sordidness of class-war, free from the taint of money.' Is not this notion of democracy shaped far more by the ideology of North-Americans of the 'cold-war' period than by Cyrano's actual words? Is not the very terminology that of the post-industrial-Revolution rather than of the Ancien Régime? Again, Professor Harvey writes of 'the parliament of birds, with its impressive statement of how liberty, equality and fraternity can operate within a social and political framework, given a citizenry of sufficient moral calibre.'<sup>40</sup> Can one justifiably compare Cyrano's theories in the Autre Monde with the pretensions of the sans-culottes, or, for that matter, of the Mayflower Puritans? By the same token, however, Professor Harvey's study does implicitly raise the all-important question of how far, in a democracy, freedom can safely be allotted to the individual, in view of the collective framework within which such freedom must necessarily be accommodated.

At least in theory, Cyrano's bird kingdom does avoid the dangers of tyranny and slavery while, at the same time, avoiding the opposite extreme of an absolutely free society verging on anarchy, but he does not begin to fill in any details as to how firm criteria for acceptable or unacceptable behaviour and beliefs might be elucidated. There is little suggestion of fraternity either in the description given by Margot, the

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40. Symposium, May 1950, p. 127.

magpie; she talks in terms more of a group of individuals each member of which is watching over all other individuals or groups of birds. Again, the so-called 'equality' of their king and of his subjects would appear to have little to do either with brotherly love or with the avoidance of class-warfare: the emphasis is placed rather on the lack of any exceptional qualities in the king - most of his assets consist in negative attributes - which assures his lack of any real power. Does not any hint of equality, and the whole notion of liberty in this episode, as in the Autre Monde in general, have far more to do with Cyrano's monistically based Naturalism and with the anti-anthropocentrism attendant upon it than with vying between social 'classes' or with political practices now associated with Capitalism?

That Professor Harvey's reference to 'a citizenry of sufficient moral calibre' is misleading is an impression borne out by his interpretation of the sorcerer-hunt at the beginning of the Soleil, for it belies the actual description: here, too, he suggests that Cyrano considered the populace to be a politically responsible body, whose interests be actively champions; Harvey writes:

He [Cyrano] begins this book with a realistic description of country people living near Toulouse, shows how great is their ignorance and their need of enlightenment. His sympathy for common man is evident here, as is his dislike of the 'long-robed gray beards' who stand in the way of educational reforms.<sup>41</sup>

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41. Ibid., p. 127.



This interpretation does not follow the text as it stands: nowhere does Cyrano make any suggestion that the populace should be educated, nor that knowledge would provide any remedy for their insufficiencies, or change in their behaviour-pattern. Far from championing the people, the Toulousain episode surely illustrates their stupidity, a stupidity which in the Lettre contre les Sorciers as in the Lettre contre les frondeurs Cyrano conceives of as a defect inseparable from the very station of 'le vulgaire'. Far from being sympathetic towards the common herd, Cyrano is consistent in despising their credulity both in the sorcery letter and in the Soleil: in both, he shows that the peasants, simple, and, in the case of women, prone to hysteria, are only too willing to be 'taken in': 'on ne doit pas croire toutes choses d'un homme, parce qu'un homme peut dire toutes choses';<sup>42</sup> he opposes the popular class to the only meritocrats in a universe where each creature is at once individual and an integral part of a totality: 'un Philosophe doit juger le vulgaire, et non pas juger comme le vulgaire.' Indeed, there is one particular in which the orthodox, hierarchized, view of human society presented in the Lettre contre les frondeurs is at one with the conceptions promulgated in the Autre Monde, and that is in the evaluation of the populace as a class:

le gouvernement populaire est le pire fleau,  
dont Dieu afflige un estat, quand il le veut  
chastier. N'est-il pas contre l'ordre de  
la nature, qu'un Bastelier ou un Crocheteur,

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42. L., p. 68.

soient en puissance de condamner à mort un General d'Armée? et que la vie du plus grand personnage soit à la discretion des polmons du plus sot, qui à perte d'haleine, demandera qu'il mûre? Mais grace à Dieu, nous sommes fort esloignez d'un tel cahos.<sup>43</sup>

At first sight, in direct contrast to the ideals of the bird kingdom, in fact, there is far more concordance between the two passages than dissimilarity: The context of the letter is that of a stratified society; popular government is weighed up as bad because it is conceived of as a system in which the populace, as Cyrano and his contemporaries know it, rules over men who are superior in wisdom to it. Here 'popular' and 'stupid' are equated, in contrast to 'Army general' who, presumably, is regarded as superior in reasoning ability. In the bird kingdom, all are of the same class; the king, the general and the people are one and the same collection of individuals. Where there is truly one class, there is really no class at all: the concept loses all meaning. In this sense, the satire contained in the bird episode does not touch upon Cyrano's opinion of the masses as a political or any other force; as for the Toulousain episode, his aim, as in the bird episode, is as much to decry the leader-figure, be it curé or king, as to evaluate the peasantry;

↳ in any case, the peasants here are certainly examples of all that Cyrano despises: for, in all these passages, the one common denominator and his one criterion of worth is reason. It is this which determines one's value as

a human being, be the role which one is playing king or citizen. It is in this sense that Cyrano's political satire by-passes questions of class.

I would agree with Professor Harvey's contention, then, that 'the core of Cyrano's concept of liberty is his respect for the individuality of every living creature',<sup>44</sup> but would question the extent to which this concept of the individual is relevant to Cyrano's political satire, and in particular, to his purpose in describing the government of the sun-birds. Is this not rather a question of ethics than politics? For the bird-king, placed in a position similar to that suffered by the populace in the orthodox regime, is not only of the same nature as his subjects, but, like La Fontaine's ass, in the fable Les animaux malades de la peste, is pushed, by the very conditions of government, into the potential role of scapegoat. He does not enjoy freedom of action either literally or figuratively; in his office, he is not asked to act out his individuality, but merely to perform a not altogether pleasant duty. Thus it is that the bird guilty of such a terrible crime as not to have merited a friend for six years, is afforded a punishment which 'fits the crime': 'il a esté condamné à estre Roy, et Roy d'un peuple différent de son espèce.'<sup>45</sup>

Again, if Cyrano's intentions in writing the bird

44. Op.cit., p. 128.

45. A.M., p. 155.

episode were, as Harvey suggests, to work out a viable socio-political system, is it not strange that the king is chosen not for his gifts, nor for his aptitude for Statesmanship, but for his inability to harm or to exert power? Of the same caste as his subjects, he is not unnaturally prone to exhibit the same faults or weaknesses as they: significantly, while the birds require both king and subjects to settle their differences rationally and reasonably, the electorate chooses not the most rational bird as leader, but the most impotent: his reasonableness stems from his weakness by nature and temperament, not from his qualities of mind. The description by the birds of their government, then, serves a mainly satirical purpose, and the wryness of tone is in keeping with that end.

Are we to conclude, along with Dr. Harth, that 'if there is one general attitude toward governmental systems to be extracted from Cyrano's works, it is indifference. He simply had no carefully considered political system in mind'?<sup>46</sup> Is Cyrano's bird kingdom merely a negative, non-constructive piece of satire of the status quo? A comparison with the political theory of two writers whose terms of reference were the truly absolutist regime of Louis XIV may help to put in perspective the satire of Cyrano against the orthodox system of his day.

The first thing that one cannot help noticing is the

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46. Op. cit., p. 206.

similarity of Cyrano's description of his bird-king, wings and feet tied, with that of the ideal monarch of Fénelon, and with that of the English constitutional monarch, by Voltaire. *Télémaque* (a une puissance absolue pour faire le bien et les mains liées pour faire le mal'.<sup>47</sup> Voltaire, some eighty years after Cyrano's death, describes thus the advantages of the English government as compared to the still absolutist French monarchy:

La nation anglaise est la seule de la terre qui soit parvenue à régler le pouvoir des rois en leur résistant, et qui d'efforts en efforts ait enfin établi ce gouvernement sage où le prince, tout-puissant pour faire du bien, a les mains liées pour faire le mal; où les seigneurs sont grands sans insolence et sans vassaux, et où le peuple partage le gouvernement sans confusion.<sup>48</sup>

Fénelon writes on the basis of first-hand knowledge of the evils of absolutism as exemplified in the reign of Louis XIV, his ideal King serving as an antidote for what he had already witnessed, hopefully to take effect in the government of the better-advised future King, his pupil. Voltaire, likewise, sets his rather flattering description of the English people in opposition to a critical, if perceptive one of Louis; for, unlike Louis, the English are, in his opinion, a peace-loving nation; of their government, he says:

Son but n'est point la brillante folie de faire des conquêtes, mais d'empêcher

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47. *Télémaque*, Bk. V, ed. Albert Cahen, Paris, 1920, I, p.191.

48. *Lettres sur les Anglais*, Cambridge, 1959, eighth letter ('Sur le Parlement'), p. 25.

que ses voisins n'en fassent; ce peuple n'est pas seulement jaloux de sa liberté, il l'est encore de celle des autres. Les Anglais étaient acharnés contre Louis XIV uniquement parce qu'ils lui croyaient de l'ambition. Ils lui ont fait la guerre de gaieté de coeur, assurément sans aucun intérêt.<sup>49</sup>

Even before the advent to power of Louis XIV, Cyrano clearly perceives the dangers of absolutism to lie in exactly the same direction. The bird kingdom stands for all that is the very opposite of the absolutist ideal. Like the 'grande noblesse' who fought so desperately for the safeguarding of their independence during the Frondes, Cyrano appears to have understood well the intent of Richelieu's, and later, Mazarin's policies. If Cyrano would seem to fight for the freedom of all individuals, as Professor Harvey suggests, he does so within the light of the actual curtailing of the freedom of one class during his own life-time. This is surely the context in which the political import of such an attitude must be assessed; the topical element in such satire is most clearly evident in an earlier passage in the Autre Monde, the last part of which is expurgated in the 1657 text, perhaps, as already suggested above, on account of that very topicality.

In the Lune, the Moon queen's daughter dismisses scathingly the belligerent heads of State responsible for the thirty years' War. The queen's daughter asks Dyrcona:

Apprenés-moy, ... vos Princes ne prétextent-ils leurs armemens que du droit de force? — Si faict,

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49. Ibid., p. 25.

la justice de  
 luy répliqué-je, et de leur cause. -- Pourquoi  
 lors, continua-t-elle, ne choisissent-ils  
 des arbitres non suspects pour estre accordez?  
 Et s'il se trouve qu'ils ayent autant de droit  
 l'un que l'autre, qu'ils demeurent comme ils  
 estoient ou qu'ils joutent en un cent de  
 picquet la Ville ou la Province dont ils sont  
 en dispute. Et cependant qu'ils font casser  
la teste à plus de quatre millions d'hommes  
qui valent mieux qu'eux, ils sont dans leur  
cabinet à goguenarder sur les circonstances  
du massacre de ces badauds; mais je me trompe  
de blâmer ainsi la vaillance de vos braves  
subjects; ils font bien de mourir pour leur  
patrie; l'affaire est importante, car il  
s'agit d'estre le vassal d'un Roy qui porte  
une fraize ou de celui qui porte un rabat.<sup>50</sup>  
 (I have italicized the section of this  
 passage expurgated in the 1657 edition.)

That there is reflected a similar distaste for absolutism in the fiction of *Cyrano* and in the description by Voltaire of just such a form of government that had subsequently existed, is indisputable, but can we push the parallel any further? At what point does the comparison break down?

From a perusal of that part of Voltaire's letter, 'Sur le Parlement', already cited, it is clear that the English, when they limited the power of their monarch, safeguarded their class structure notwithstanding; even a king who had lost his former absolute domination over his subjects still acted as the ultimate arbiter in political differences: 'La Chambre des Pairs et celle des Communes sont les arbitres de la nation, le roi est le sur-arbitre', explains Voltaire.<sup>51</sup> The English King, while being given leeway for tolerance, and while being

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50. A.M., p. 56.

51. Op.cit., p. 25.

kept in check by the Parliamentary 'representatives' of his subjects, is still very much a Head of State; his weakness stems not from his nature, but from constitutionally devised hindrances which prevent his abusing a power which he still possesses. He continues to assume office by birthright, he continues to be a potential force in the realm, the system working towards the maintenance of peace and order, precisely because it recognizes the existence of the desire for power in all human beings. It is a viable form of government because it accommodates itself to what noblemen and Kings are and sets the one as a watch upon the other.

Cyrano is at once more cynical and less pragmatic in his conception of government. His way of describing the birds' reaction to kings and Kingship corresponds very nearly to the tone in which the queen's daughter dismisses Hapsburg and French monarchs in the Lune. So great is the birds' fear of power, that their elected leader seems to lose even the right of appeal against an unjust accusation; such appeal is dependant upon the desires of his subjects, for it is they who assess both his behaviour and that of their fellow-citizens. The very invention of the bird-king provides the opportunity to deny all the normally accepted rights and roles of that office. In this far, it is accurate to see in the description an excellent example of the 'monde à rebours' technique, and also, to doubt the possibility that Cyrano gave any credence to the pastiche as an attempt to substitute a better form of government for the one he knew. Nevertheless, as the comparison with Constitutional Government shows, elements of his



theory were to prove viable in another context; his satire does raise interesting political questions. Its very correctives imply a certain awareness of the problem of individual freedom within a collectivity: Cyrano's birds would seem to avoid the anarchy that Plato saw as a necessary evil in a true democracy. While Cyrano does not arrive at a theory of the 'general will' or even the 'will of all', his eradication of the monarch as a political force does, perhaps, lead to a government which, if instituted, might prove practical. For clearly, as an examination of Cyrano's diatribe on War and upon Justice will show, despite his depiction of the bird King, he was not unaware of the forces that, in fact, prevail in society. Indeed, his bird satire goes hand in hand with his condemnation of war and his realization that, in practice, the birds are just as unjust in their legal decisions as any other creatures or men. Their populace would like to lynch Dyrcona, just in case he might get a fair trial: despite their hatred of political force, they are the first to want to use it.<sup>52</sup>

The weakness of the birds' political system lies in its very strength: to work, it requires both ruler and subjects who are capable of reasoning well. But even were this to be achieved, we are never told by what criteria an opinion or decision is regarded as rational or irrational, acceptable or punishable. It is not sufficient an answer to maintain that a

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52. A.M., p. 150: 'la populace des oiseaux avoit fort crié de ce qu'on me gardoit si long-temps sans me dévorer; ... ils avoient remontré que j'amaigrirois tellement qu'on ne trouveroit plus sur moy que des os à ronger.'

political system founded upon the cult of Reason will itself be reasonable, and the birds' actual behaviour proves that such a view is wrong.

The discrepancy between theory of government and actual legal practices is, perhaps, no accident; both stem from the same awareness of the corruptive potential of all forms of power. The bird regime cannot, therefore, very easily serve any practical political purpose by the very nature of its satirical purpose: to condemn abuses of power on ethical grounds. But, in any case, to adjudge its political import in political terms, it is necessary to have a wider background against which to place it: that of Cyrano's depiction of the absurdity of War and of Man's, moon or earth-man's, justice.

### iii Warfare and Justice.

In his condemnation of warfare, Cyrano accepts no compromises; he proves it to be, by its very nature, a logical absurdity, and thus, 'le canal de toutes les injustices'.<sup>53</sup> The Selenians' rules for combat, described by the Moon queen's daughter, would appear to assure the fairest methods, and, in consequence, the most just issue possible in any battle. Each side is evenly matched in brain as well as brawn; as in a game of chess, it is not so much the territory gained which decides the outcome as the number of players lost: the first round of the battle is won by the side with the lesser number of wounded,

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53. A.M., p. 156.

dead, or of prisoners. Victories achieved by brain-power count three times as much towards the final outcome as those effected by more conventional army skills. Finally, the side scoring the greatest number of victories chooses not the territory of their enemy, but the more suitable ruler - from its own or its enemy's. So, as in the later bird episode, the emphasis is upon the nature of the ruler, rather than in the accumulation of material possessions.<sup>54</sup>

Such a war makes more sense than one founded, as was, in Cyrano's opinion, the thirty-years' war, upon brute force, and fought in the name not of its combattants but of remote rulers, who move their militia around like so many inert pawns. If we take the argument so far, and so far only, we can perceive similarities between it and one which, as Professor Frank Sutcliffe has explained, was typical of a whole era: that which witnessed and bore the consequences of the replacement of sword and bow by artillery:

Car l'artillerie est en train de transformer les conditions de la guerre dans un sens défavorable à l'idéologie aristocratique. La vertu du chevalier réside dans son courage et dans la renommée qu'il lui vaut. Mais comment ce courage trouvera-t-il à s'employer si, au lieu d'avoir en face de lui un adversaire non moins courageux, non moins digne de respect à tout point de vue que lui-même, le chevalier a affaire à un ennemi qu'il ne connaît pas, dont il ne sait rien et qui ne lui donne même pas l'occasion de se mesurer avec lui? L'armement nouveau met en échec les vertus les plus éclatantes; l'armement nouveau est niveleur.<sup>55</sup>

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54. A.M., pp. 55-7.

55. F.E. Sutcliffe, Le Réalisme de Charles Sorel, Paris, 1965, p.119.

Sorel's Francion reflects the nobleman's indignation at his lost opportunity to shine on the battlefield:

Quelle gloire y a t'il? Le plus brave  
homme du monde est souvent jetté par  
terre avec un coup de mousquet qu'un  
coyon a tiré, pour faire son apprentissage.  
Si César, Alexandre, Amadis et Charlemagne  
vivoient maintenant, ils n'iroient pas si  
volontiers au combat, comme ils ont fait  
autrefois.<sup>56</sup>

Proud of his noble independence and jealous of his 'virtue', Sorel's anti-hero seeks to gain glory by means of the duel, to compensate for his inability to be able to do so in an army combat where the individual has little influence. For, as Professor Sutcliffe points out,<sup>57</sup> Francion does not object to gun-warfare on account of the devastation it reaps in terms of human lives lost, but because it prevents him winning 'gloire'. Combat by the sword in private ensures the nobleman of that opportunity to act independently which he has lost on the battlefield.

Like Sorel's character, the Selenians seem to decry the injustices of modern warfare, rather than warfare itself. However, the reported pronouncement of a Moon philosopher which follows immediately on the explanations of the moon-queen's daughter, carries the argument a radical stage further; for it consists in his adopting a position which is in direct contrast to that of Francion.<sup>58</sup> While, generally, Cyrano's attitudes

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56. Quoted by F.E. Sutcliffe, ibid., p. 124, from Sorel's Histoire comique de Francion, (Pléiade ed.) Paris, 1958, p. 258.

57. Op. cit., pp. 125-7.

58. A.M., p. 57.

reflect those of the nobility, and while the first stage in the argument reflects a desire to found warfare upon noble principles, the position adopted by his next speaker eschews altogether the aspirations of that class: the argument is all the more striking given, on the one hand, the stand made in the novel for freedom of action, and, on the other, Lebret's contention in his preface to the 1657 edition, that, in real life, Cyrano was himself an expert duellist. But, as we have already seen in the bird kingdom, so in the Autre Monde as a whole, class as such does not count, and is of relevance only insofar that the members of any particular group or class reflect attitudes and beliefs which Cyrano condones or condemns. His ethics do not take it into account, and it is on ethical grounds that all methods of waging war, by artillery or by single combat, are condemned. So, the Moon philosopher takes a stand which is as 'levelling' in its implications as gun-warfare was to Sorel's hero.

The philosopher argues, then, that all war is unjust and inglorious, for, in practice, it is impossible, as the Selenians attempt to do, to match up the contestants exactly, that is, fairly. There is, indeed, no more room for personal glory in single combat than there is room for justice in War itself. Both on the collective and the personal level, therefore, warfare is unwarranted. Cyrano puts forward, here, an argument that is altogether pacifist; it corresponds to the view expressed repeatedly through the Autre Monde that all life is sacro-sanct: thus it is that the Selenians wear around their belt not a sword but penal-shaped ornaments, symbolizing their reverence for life. Likewise, the refusal to take every opportunity to afford

the begetting of children is regarded as a crime in the Royaume des Amants.<sup>59</sup>

The way in which the Moon philosopher proves his point raises as acute a problem concerning human action as the problem it seeks to solve concerning the right to life. For his retort to the queen's daughter, that no war can be a just war, rests on the assumption that, even if all other qualities are matched, those of courage or cowardice are beyond the control not only of those responsible for matching contestants, but of the expressors of such emotional attitudes also. That the soldier should display emotions which will, in the eyes of Cyrano's contemporaries, win him praise or opprobrium, is no more subject to that soldier's will than is his height, strength or brain-power. As is his endowment of reason, so too, his emotional make-up is purely physically determined:

Cependant, avec toute l'esgallité que vous recommandés tant à vos gladiateurs, ilz ne se battent jamais pareils, car l'un sera de grande, l'autre de petite taille; l'un sera adroit, l'autre n'aura jamais manié l'espée; l'un sera robuste, l'autre foible; et quand mesmes ces disproportions seroient esgallées, qu'ilz seroient aussy grands, aussy adroits et aussy forts l'un que l'autre, encore ne seroient-ilz pas pareilz, car l'un des deux aura peut-estre plus de courage que l'autre; et soubz ombre que ce brutal ne considérera pas le péril, qu'il sera bilieux et qu'il aura plus de sang, qu'il aura le coeur plus serré avec toutes ces qualitez qui font le courage, comme si ce n'estoit pas, aussy bien qu'une espée, une arme que son ennemy n'a point! Il s'ingère de se ruer éperduement sur luy, de l'effrayer et d'oster la vie à ce pauvre

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59. A.M., p. 88; pp. 193-4.

homme qui prévoit le danger, dont la chaleur est estouffée dans la pituite et de qui le coeur est trop vaste pour unir les esprits nécessaires à dissiper cette glace qu'on nomme poltronnerie. Ainsy vous loués cet homme d'avoir tué son ennemy avec avantage, et le louant de hardiesse, vous le loués d'un péché contre nature, puis que la hardiesse tend à la destruction. 60

Thus it is by the very moral criteria of the nobility that Cyrano proves war to be an absurdity. Their whole code of 'gloire' becomes meaningless: where the individual has no real control over his actions or attitudes, he cannot, logically, claim merit for them; it would seem to follow that, he cannot properly claim either responsibility or, it follows, merit for his courage; nor can he do so, seemingly, for his skill or force, for all are as much a question of chance in terms of the individual's role in them as Fortune itself: to vanquish by the one is, therefore, as inglorious as to vanquish by the other means:

Si ça esté par adresse, il [le vainqueur] a frappé sans doute son adversaire par un endroit où il ne l'attendoit pas, ou plus viste qu'il n'estoit vraysemblable, ou, feignant de l'attaquer d'un costé, il l'a assailly de l'autre. Tout cela c'est affiner, c'est tromper, c'est trahir. Or la finesse, la tromperie, la trahison ne doibvent pas faire l'estime d'un véritable Généreux. S'il a triomphé par force, estimerés-vous son ennemy vaincu, puisqu'il a esté violenté? Non, sans doute; non plus que vous ne dirés pas qu'un homme ayt perdu la victoire, encore qu'il soit accablé de la cheute d'une montagne parce qu'il n'a pas esté en puissance de la gagner. Tout de mesme, cettuy-là n'a point esté surmonté,

à cause qu'il ne s'est pas trouvé dans ce moment disposé à pouvoir résister aux violences de son adversaire.

Si ça esté par hazard qu'il a terrassé son ennemy, c'est la Fortune et non pas luy que l'on doit couronner, il n'y a rien contribué; et enfin le vaincu n'est non plus blasmable que le joueur de dez qui sur diz-sept points en voit faire dix-huit".<sup>61</sup>

All honour is taken away from the battle-field by this argument, but at the same time, such an assessment of human behaviour in any one situation must raise the question of the possibility of freedom of choice, or indeed of moral responsibility itself. It is noteworthy that the dice-playing image used to explain chance creation is reiterated here. Perhaps all our actions are no more in our command than is our very birth, or the continuous reproduction of our species. It is ironic that it<sup>is</sup>/while Cyrano is putting the case of every individual's right to live that the very value of that life, in generally accepted human terms, is called into question. This whole question of personal freedom and determinism will be treated, however, more fully in the next chapter.

Like Hobbes, Pascal and, before them, Machiavelli, Cyrano admits, in effect, that there is a gap between what is just in absolute terms, and how society works. In time of war, an army's or a man's victory will only accidentally prove to be commensurate with superior quality or the justice of their cause; for force or chance are the determinants. There can be no link between an ethical standard and an activity based upon chance or brute force. Even given just methods, how can

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61. A.M., p. 57.



we ensure a just issue, for there is no known controlling factor to ensure that just methods have been achieved? Equal cynicism characterizes Cyrano's opinion of the enforcement of 'justice' by legislation and civil trials, for the legal apparatus is far more relativistic, and those who use it infinitely less scrupulous, than the military one. Rulers, priests, judges and counsel do not even want to be fair, but only to maintain their authority.

Neither in the Moon, nor on Earth, nor yet in the pure regions of the Sun, does Dyrcona encounter any justice worthy of the name. On all three it is meted out according to criteria dependent solely on the interests of the rulers or upon the purely relative customs and beliefs of the particular society. For example, the moon and bird trials, while serving to ridicule Man's pretensions and narrowness of vision, serve the purpose doubly by also showing the unscrupulousness of anybody in a position of authority.

In what is obviously a pastiche of Galileo's trial, the moon priests order their people to believe in what is patently untrue by the evidence of their own senses and judgement: the ability of Dyrcona to learn their language cannot be denied, and the Selenians deduce from this that he, like they, possesses reason. However, both on the grounds of his different external appearance and of his monstrous habit of killing birds, the priests badger the people into accepting that he is merely a featherless parrot.<sup>62</sup> Yet, the people are sufficiently dubious

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62. A.M., pp. 52-3.

of the Priests' persuasion to have to be threatened and curbed by the Priests' superior force; their methods amount to 'brainwashing', and reflect all the weaknesses of such a technique:

*l'estime qu'on faisoit de mon esprit vint jusques-là, que le Clergé fut contrainct de faire publier un Arrest par lequel on deffendoit de croire que j'eusse de la raison, avec un commandement très exprès à toutes personnes, de quelque qualité et condition qu'elles fussent, de s'imaginer, quoy que je peusse faire de spirituel, que c'estoit l'instinct qui me le faisoit faire.* 63

The Court procedure further exemplifies the use of unjust means to secure a result in keeping with the interests of the faction in power. Prosecuting Counsel has recourse to a trumpet,

*qu'il avoit tout exprès choisie affin que la violence de ce ton martial eschauffast leurs esprits à ma mort, et affin d'empescher par cette esmotion que le raisonnement ne pût faire son office, comme il arrive dans nos armées, où ce tintamarre de trompettes et de tambours empesche le soldat de réfléchir sur l'importance de sa vie.* 64

Dyrcona, thoroughly confused and shocked by the noise, is nevertheless admirably defended by the daemon, who, unimpressed by the Moon-rulers' methods, argues that whatever the apparent success of such indoctrination, the deviant spirits upon whom it is practised will never be completely convinced of their supposed error. Force or persuasion may evoke a denial of their BELIEFS, but not an eradication of them; thus, he says of

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63. A.M., p.54.

64. A.M., p. 58.

Dyrcona: 'il vous dira bien qu'il croit, mais ne le croira pas pour cela'. His case is borne out by the people who, though commanded to be silent by their leaders, in effect disobey them by applauding the daemon's speech. The last resort of the Court must be, therefore, to convict Dyrcona in camera. He is required to deny publicly not only, like Galileo, what he most fervently believes, but what he knows by first-hand experience to be true - he does go to the Moon, and the moon-men's 'moon' is Dyrcona's Earth. Ironically, both priests and Dyrcona believe they are right; the real culpability of the ruling class lies in their denying to any but themselves the right to hold an opinion, and in believing that they must be right by virtue of their office. Opposed to their stranglehold, the daemon asks, 'puisque tout homme est libre, ne lui est-il pas libre aussi de s'imaginer ce qu'il voudra?'<sup>65</sup>

Clearly, Cyrano is just as familiar with the Machiavellian principle, and practice of the powerful, of subordinating justice to force as are Pascal and Hobbes. Unlike them, however, he condemns the practice, and fails, or perhaps, refuses, to take it into account as a permanent fact of political life: his bird kingdom provides no real answer to the problem; merely to deny the weapon of force or power to the ruler is really to adopt a head-in-the-sand position. However, it is presumably because of the almost invariable misuse of power that Cyrano constantly opposes authority and reason. The individual observer, using as his tools of judgement observation and good sense, is more likely to arrive at an apprehension of reality, or at least a fair appraisal

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65. A.M., p.59.

of it, than any authority having its own interests to uphold and its own position to maintain. By its very nature then, power corrupts: hence, Cyrano's discarding of it in the bird kingdom, unreal though such a solution may be. Hence too, the fact that the collective mass tends also to view the world from a prejudiced and equally distorted angle. If the moonmen are swayed by the good sense of the daemon and the evidence of their own ears, the Toulousain peasants, by contrast, are swayed by superstition and the evilly-intentioned Pasteur de Colignac. It would seem to suit them to be as unquestioning as the Selenians are judicious; their heads filled with superstitions nonsense, their general ignorance paramount, they seem only too pleased to suspend whatever judgement they do possess in the new-felt flush of power that the weight of numbers bestows upon the crowd. Naive and simple, they are only too willing to act out their credulity. If they are deceived, it is very much their own fault.

Popular justice suffers from exactly the same weaknesses as that of the rulers. Their motivation is the wish to 'get their own way'; once again, 'might is right'. The Toulousain mob howls after Dyrcona's blood, the bird populace demands an immediate reckoning, a bird lynching, considering the normal legal process too slow.<sup>66</sup> All men, leaders and led, judge according to what they are used to, considering their own appearance and their own customs as the norm and, in this, sacro-sanct. Not only do their judgements stem from expediency, but also from their necessary relativity of vision. Dyrcona is not only a monster for the birds: he is frightening and

66. A.M., pp. 107-9, 113-16, and p.150.

dangerous, and above all inferior, simply because he does not look or behave like them. The moon-priests, likewise, judge on appearances. In both trials Dyrcona is accused and condemned, and the verdict itself is made, on affective grounds alone.

As Pascal was to emphasize, all human justice is conditioned by geographical location, that is, to the customs of each nation: 'Plaisante justice qu'une rivière borne. Vérité au deçà des Pyrénées, erreur au delà.' For both Pascal and Cyrano, the error that men make is to assume universal validity in their necessarily relative laws:

Ils confessent que la justice n'est pas dans ces coutumes, mais qu'elle réside dans les lois naturelles, comme en tout pays. Certainement ils le soutiendraient opiniâtrément, si la témérité du hasard qui a semé les lois humaines en avait rencontré au moins une qui fût universelle; mais la plaisanterie est telle, que le caprice des hommes s'est si bien diversifié qu'il n'y en a point.

The main distinction between the two thinkers, however, is that Pascal is quite content to support the legal system in any given country, knowing the laws to be without just foundation and essentially expedient:

Rien, suivant la seule raison, n'est juste de soi; tout branle avec le temps. La coutume fait toute l'équité, par cette seule raison qu'elle est reçue; c'est le fondement mystique de son autorité. Qui la ramène à son principe l'anéantit.<sup>67</sup>

Cyrano protests against the discrepancy between the actual

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67. Pensées, ed. Brunschvicg, no. 294 (modern spelling).

system and what it purports to stand for, but in a way only goes to prove Pascal's point by substituting for it a form of government which does not begin to solve the problem on a really practical basis. Cyrano's birds' Constitution merely prevents either ruler or ruled having complete command by setting the one to watch over the other: we have no guarantee that either is free of the prejudices 'justified' by custom. To choose a weak leader does not really begin to answer all the problems of which Cyrano is aware. In many ways then, Cyrano appears as cynical as Pascal, but less realistic; he is content to condemn what he sees, Pascal to explain and to tolerate it; but then Pascal can afford to accept that Machiavellian-type expediency which so horrifies Cyrano: the refusal to accept any form of transcendental power takes from Cyrano a resource which Pascal exploits to the full. Pascal can tolerate an imperfect, relativistic, unjust justice on Earth, given his belief in the existence of a divinity who, by definition, is absolutely just (though that justice has no meeting-point with human justice); Cyrano has no such way out; for him, the only absolute is Nature, itself but the sum of its parts. A living force, infinitely varied, Her ways and 'laws' are so diverse that they cannot really serve as a model for human institutions. From the human viewpoint, the natural phenomena appear to be 'ruled' in any case not by reason but by Chance. We are now able to understand the better the inadequacies of Cyrano's political theory.

By maintaining as the head of State a monarch, yet at

the same time stripping him of his traditionally accepted authority and source of power, Cyrano falls between two stools. On the one hand, he does away with the hierarchy of the Medieval world, eschewing all three father figures, God, the father, and the King, and, having rejected the transcendental, equates all human beings in natural terms. (If the populace is scorned, it is because, de facto, its members exhibit inferior human traits such as stupidity and the inability to exercise independent judgements. Likewise, the son is regarded, socially, as superior to the father simply because, in practice, young men do possess superior sensory and cognitive equipment. The criterion for these evaluations is not existing social or political groupings but reason informed by experience.) On the other hand, in this rejection of the traditional hierarchies, though we are reminded of Machiavelli's new political criteria, there are crucial differences between Cyrano's vision and the Modern State: Machiavelli would destroy the power of the Clergy, but his aim was to replace one authority by another, that is, to replace the Church's domination by that of, for him, an equally sacro-sanct institution, the State personified by the Prince. Cyrano, by contrast, merely rejects all forms of authority, preferring the possibility of disponibility not only for the individuals who make up the body of the State, but also in its very government. While Machiavelli seeks to assure the security of the people by a strong leadership which will manipulate the very people it purports to protect, for Cyrano the only criterion for acceptable behaviour and good government is a good sense which is fashioned by no ideology and no collective aspiration other than the wish to live and let live. In short, Cyrano's politics

are, perhaps somewhat naïvely, moulded by his ethics, so that he makes the mistake of believing that the means adopted by the leader, and the political system itself, must be as ethically sound as the end pursued. The expediency which is the hallmark of Machiavellian politics is anathema to Cyrano, and it is so precisely because he envisages the State and the individual in exactly the same terms. Both are viewed through an essentially non-historical eye, for which the State is <sup>as</sup> much an ever-shifting reality as is the individual. There can never be any end which could justify the means without an historical perspective. For Cyrano, it is the present which counts in his collectivity as in his evaluation of the individual, there being no reality for him but the present. Seen in this light, a six-monthly term of office seems as viable as a six-yearly one; in any case, the monarch may be deposed at any time prior to the normal termination of his office. His government is as fluid as is the constant amalgamation and disintegration of groups of atoms in any creature's body, or the universe itself.

Even Cyrano's use of the cyclical theory is of a quite different nature from that of Machiavelli, and this is so, despite the adoption of it, in an historical context, by a man he openly admired, Gabriel Naudé.<sup>68</sup> For Machiavelli, it was all-important since, he believed, it affords Man the chance of taming Fortune, of mapping out a future policy and plan of action upon the basis of the cycle of events in the past. For Cyrano, however, Fortune is capricious, and is seen as it affects the

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68. Cf. L., p. 183; 'le docte Naudé'.



present, rather than as being beholden to any pattern or continuity. The man whose atomic structure is repeated at some future date is unaware of this at the time it happens, even though the 'second' man will exhibit all the characteristics of the first. The cyclical theory is used by Cyrano to describe a physical reality, not, as for Machiavelli, a political one.

It is highly debatable whether any political theory can be put into practice which does not take history and existing institutions into account, even if only to deny the past and substitute for it new ideas and new patterns. It is significant that, even when the opportunity arises for Cyrano to bring his system of values to bear upon his political theory, he fails to perceive it, and this, despite having a precedent in Plato's work. In the Republic, Socrates argues that the ideal State would be a meritocracy, governed by philosophers. Cyrano, similarly, prizes the philosophers above all other men, and that, precisely because of their superior endowment of that very reason which would help to assure a peaceful and effective regime. Yet, Cyrano's philosophers have no truck with other men, living together in their own province on the sun. Perhaps this could be explained away by the fact that, epitomizing reason, and reason being considered the opposite and enemy of authority, the philosopher would have no wish to reign. Cyrano, in effect, rejects all forms of institution, and thus makes no real effort to replace any 'bad' authority with a better one.

The Modern State is a nationalistic one, which takes war into account as part of reality, however regrettable that might be. It consists of a machinery which has as its object the balancing of power, if possible to its own advantage. This will include maintaining the status quo. The political totality is a nation or group of men with common aims. Thus, there can be no workable political system, in practice, however altruistically philanthropic its perpetrators may appear, which does not manipulate power to the advantage of the group of men it serves. But Cyrano does not even recognise Man as a species as a separate group or entity: he is merely of a different atomic make-up. All the emphasis is upon the possibility of breaking down such barriers, as in the postulation of a Universal language immediately understood by all creatures. His totality is Nature itself, and his ultimate criterion for all behaviour, in species, nations as well as individuals, is that which serves Nature; that is, all that affords each part of the whole the greatest opportunity of realizing its potential through self-expression - I can find no evidence in Cyrano's work for a teleological connotation here, however.

Paradoxically, each creature and each individual matters, as part of the whole; no one thing or person matters any more than any other as an expression of Nature, though what he expresses may be of more worth in a particular circumstance. This is probably why kings are no more important per se than the subjects they govern, while, in terms of what they express, the philosopher is obviously eminently superior to other men. Thus, all are important as parts of the multiple that form the whole, but for

any part to jeopardize the expression of any other part of that totality is criminal: king and citizen are, therefore, equally capable of crime, and, if they commit one, equally worthy of punishment; each must be judged according to his acts, and not his station.

If Cyrano's political theory appears non-constructive, this is not so much because he is indifferent to political questions, as because his theory and satire reflect a system of values which does not easily lend itself to the game of politics as we know it. For him, Statesmanship, like life and Truth itself, consists in immediacy, ideas in the instinctive apprehension of data by the senses or in rational judgements based upon data relevant to the present, as it presents itself at any one moment of time. Ad hoc living leads to ad hoc justice, which one suspects, for Cyrano, has more chance of corresponding to absolute justice than any penal code or form of government hitherto known on Earth.

Cyrano's politics are in spirit anti-Machiavellian,<sup>69</sup> but whether this is by design or accident is neither clear nor of prime importance: for the premises behind his thinking here stem from a Naturalism which provides us with a new set of values, which in themselves are a-political. Superiority is

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69. Cf. Madeleine Alcover, La pensée philosophique et scientifique de Cyrano de Bergerac, Geneva, 1970, pp. 123-4: 'Les fondements de la vie politique des oiseaux sont la contre-partie de ceux des régimes du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle: la justice s'oppose à la force; la liberté, à l'arbitraire; l'égalité, aux trois ordres.' By contrast, she considers Cyrano's Mazarinades to be Machiavellian (p. 175).

not determined by class or political office, but by the ability to use one's natural gifts well. His conception of reality is non-essentialist to the extent that both individual and collectivity are an ever-emergent, ever-changing force. Such a vision of the world leaves little room for a stable, self-perpetuating ruling-class, and Cyrano is, not surprisingly, scathing in his attack on those who endeavour to create or maintain one.

This is not to say that Cyrano does not understand well those forces and ambitions which Machiavelli and, later, Hobbes accepted as basic human drives, took into account and attempted to channel towards an outcome which they considered as morally good, or beneficial to men, as their means of attaining it were illicit and impure. Cyrano's diatribe on war and his cynical appraisal of justice demonstrate his awareness of perennial political problems of conscience. His, in itself, laudable and principled satire, by divorcing 'what is' and 'what would be in a reasonable and principled world' distances him from the real political scene, separating his fiction in kind - and not just degree - from that of the great political theorists.

The fact that Cyrano would seem to take very little from the political theories expressed in Tommaso Campanella's Città del Sole bears out our findings. The omission is all the more significant that the work consists in an attempt to describe the ideal human society by a man incarcerated for twenty-eight years for his part in a plot against the tyranny of the Spanish. Thus, however idealistic some of his recommendations

might appear, they are conceived by a thinker whose practical political experience had caused the direst hardship. That Campanella was championed as a martyr in France, at least, prior to his arrival there in 1634, could not have escaped Cyrano's notice, yet it is the Calabrian's theory of cognition, his Telesian-based notion of heat and cold, and his descriptions of the force of the imagination that Cyrano emulates.<sup>70</sup> The only social reform envisaged by Cyrano which is reminiscent of the Città is the communal system of pairing off young men and women for the purpose of mating practised in the Royaume des Amants. Yet, even here, the import is not the same: like Plato, in the Republic, Campanella aims to produce a super-race of perfect progeny; Cyrano, to emphasize the desirability of assuring as great a prolificity of life as possible. What, then, in brief, are Campanella's main ideas, and how do those of Cyrano differ from them?

Despite his Naturalism and his defence of the New Astronomy, Campanella retains a vision of the world which is medieval, for it is theistic and hierarchised. Essentially neoplatonic and hermetic,<sup>71</sup> it is conceived of within a Christian context. His theories are couched in medieval-type correspondences, and his city-state comprizes an enclosed, inward-looking community, both structurally and in its mores. For, he argues, 'there exists a wonderful harmony between the

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70. Cf. chapter VII below, pp. 403-9.

71. Cf. Frances Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, London, 1964, ch. xx, pp. 360-97.

celestial, the terrestrial, and the moral world', assured by a divinely preordained order.<sup>72</sup> As is the case also for Giordano Bruno, God is the absolute One, of a different nature from man, though it is not entirely clear whether he lies outside the city or is conceived of as an abstract idea, epitomizing Good. In any case, He is the father-figure par excellence, providential but distanced from the Solarians, whose terrestrial political institutions are inferior to, though inspired by, His position of supreme authority. The 'moral world' consists in the desire to emulate God's perfect nature, and is attained to by means of a series of graded institutions. The intercessor of the sun inhabitants is the sun itself, which the citizens worship as their Grand Priest; their potentates descend from this Grand Priest, the go-between of man and God, to a governing body of four, elected from among the magistrature, who are aided by three 'civil servants', namely Potentia, Sapientia, and Amor. These three decide all matters on behalf of the Great Council, or electorate, which consists of all citizens over twenty-years' old. The powers of this governing body are wide-ranging: Potentia is responsible for the administration of military affairs, Sapientia for that of Labour, Culture, and the Sciences, Amor for Education, the regulation of generation, feeding habits, and dress. Though, like Cyrano's bird king, the magistrates are elected, the four among them who rule can only decide themselves to resign; they are not subject to the whims of the populace. Thus, while Campanella says that the will of the people is sovereign, in fact, all the onus is

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72. Thomas Campanella, La Cité du soleil (translated by A. Zévaès), Paris, 1950, p. 117. (The English translation is my own)

upon the four chief magistrates, deemed morally responsible enough to be aware of the right time - in strictly moral terms - to relinquish office. In this particular, Campanella appears far more naïve than Cyrano, if wittingly so.<sup>73</sup> At the same time, his city-state represents a serious attempt to counter Machiavellian theory with the description of a society in which politics is subordinated to ethics.

This notwithstanding, Campanella is realistic enough to cater for war: the Solarians envisage fighting other states hostile towards them, but also contemplate annexing those which are ruled by tyrants and despots, in order to instruct them of their ways, persuaded as they are of the perfect nature of their society. God is on their side; they invoke His aid before going into battle. The dangers of ideological warfare, as of a form of collective dictatorship by an overly self-righteous governing body, implicit though unintentionally so in Campanella's treatise, were, perhaps, perceptible to Cyrano; both his lunarians and his birds avoid just such dangers by allowing the victorious side in any war to choose the future ruler from either side, and by allowing the electorate to demand the king's resignation in the event that he fails them. Despite some similarities in details, then, there is little mark of Campanellan political theory in the Autre Monde.

The Città advocates a theocracy, and though the state is ruled by a committee, not a monarch, it is conceived essentially

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73. Ibid., p. 93.

in the same framework as medieval political theory. By retaining a hierarchy in which the religious order is the ultimate authority, Campanella looks backward; his answer to the modern state of Machiavelli, <sup>a type of rule</sup> to be effected by Cyrano's contemporaries, for <sup>whom</sup> the State takes precedence, appears anachronistic. Campanella's republic is as far removed from democracy as was Plato's; Cyrano's meritocratic philosophers, placed in their own province, are further distanced in conception also from Campanella's four magistrates than those magistrates from Plato's ruling class. Cyrano's bird kingdom is alien to Campanella's sun-city. Yet, despite the utopian ring of the Calabrian's ideas, the system of government he outlines is both detailed and coherent, whereas the bird-society of Cyrano appears as over-generalized and impractical, and as more satirical than constructive in design. Both anti-machiavellian, the two sun-worlds are imagined within completely different terms of reference.

While, in his description of the universe, Cyrano retains an analogical approach, in doing away with the medieval concept of hierarchy in one branch of philosophy he is led to dispense with the corresponding hierarchies in all the others. Whether the root of this dehierarchisation be his physics, his astronomy, or his anti-anthropocentrism, it results in the setting up of a new series of correspondences of an unstratified nature. Once the closed universe, with its primum mobile, heavenly spheres, and sub-lunar world is discredited, to give

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place to an infinite one, populated with an infinite number of world-systems, then there can be no longer any true centre, but only the semblance of one relative to each onlooker's particular physical point of reference. Cyrano follows up this vision of infinite relativity with a satire on social and political institutions which brings out all its potential in human terms: man is not only disenfranchised physically, nor only <sup>so</sup> vis à vis the animal kingdom, but is so also within his own system. In failing to take into account the political and moral consequences of postulating an infinite universe Campanella appears less modern than Cyrano; in purely political terms, neither set of theories would have much chance of working, if interpreted strictly within the spirit of the creator of it, in a modern State, whether 'modern' be understood in the seventeenth-century absolutist sense or the twentieth-century travestied 'democratic' one.

Rather than approximating to the thought of Renaissance or seventeenth-century political theorists, Cyrano's social and political satire coheres with his anti-anthropocentrism. In this, he differs from the sixteenth-century Italian Naturalists, even though he inherits much from their philosophy; for, even Bruno's relativism does not lead to an attack on man's presumption as a species. In his debunking of authority, Cyrano is much closer in spirit to his immediate predecessor, Théophile de Viau. In the Pyrame et Thisbé in particular, there is expressed exactly the same sense of opposition between authority and the

natural, though there it is love, not reason, which represents Nature. Father and King are tyrants, each attempting to thwart the life-giving, spontaneous passion of the young lovers.

The King, as both he and his subjects conceive of him, typifies the absolutist ideal; the assassins he hires see him as being held responsible for his acts only to the gods; the King may break men's laws, royally sanctioned, and even the gods' laws for men, without a qualm, for he, like the gods themselves, reigns supreme. Théophile's King explains the concept of Justice in Machiavellian terms (as popularly understood):

Tu sçais que la justice est au dessous du Roy;  
La raison deffaillant, la violence est bonne  
A qui sçait bien user des droicts d'une couronne.<sup>74</sup>

The King's hired assassin, Syllar, echoes the orthodox belief that the gods, who serve as the supreme authority for ordinary mortals, serve too as a model for kings, whose authority on earth parallels theirs in the heavens:

En desdisant son Roy, quelque juste apparence  
Que puisse prendre un peuple, il commet une offence;  
Comme les Dieux au Ciel, sur la terre les Roys  
Establissent aussi des souveraines Loix,  
Ils partagent égaux ce que le monde enserre:  
Les Dieux sont Roys du Ciel, les Roys Dieux de la terre,  
Jupiter d'un clin d'oeil fait les Astres mouvoir,  
Et nos Princes sur nous ont le mesme pouvoir,  
A la grandeur des Dieux leur grandeur se figure,  
Comme au vouloir des Dieux leur vouloir se mesure.

This king models his conduct on the capricious and unlaw-abiding

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74. Les amours tragiques de Pyrame et Thisbé, ed. Guido Saba, Naples, 1967, I, iii, ll. 194-6.

pagan gods, however, not upon the good and merciful Christian one; he is truly a tyrant, for, in his eyes, justice is wholly dependent upon his whim: 'Car déplaire à son Roy, c'est avoir faict un crime'.<sup>75</sup>

The ultimate question as to whether the king fears divine retribution is left unanswered, save obliquely by his unfortunate subjects:

Pour nous exterminer quand ils en ont envie,  
Les Roys ont cent moyens pour nous oster la vie,  
Nos jours sont dans leurs mains, ils les peuvent finir,  
Ils peuvent le plus juste innocemment punir,  
Quelque tort que ce soit quand un Roy nous accuse,  
Sa grande autorité ne manque point d'excuse,  
Contre le Prince aux droicts, il n'esse faut fier,  
Le pretexte plus faux le peut justifier.<sup>76</sup>

For Théophile's king, as for Machiavelli's Prince, the State takes precedence over religion; however, whereas Machiavelli's aim is the happiness and well-being of ruler and ruled alike through the safeguarding of a State which exists to serve both mutually, the fictional epitome of kingship imagined by Théophile includes the right to abuse power.

The fact that Théophile seems to have invented this character — he does not appear in any previous known French work based on the legend,<sup>77</sup> and the fact that he gives him no

75. Ibid., III, i, ll. 501-10 and I, iii, l. 208.

76. Ibid., III, i, ll. 557-64.

77. Cf. Wolfgang G. van Emden's article on 'Sources de l'histoire de "Pyrame et Thisbé" chez Baif et Théophile de Viau' in Mélanges Pierre le Gentil, Paris, 1973, pp. 869-79; also, his companion article on 'La légende de Pyrame et Thisbé: textes français des X<sup>ve</sup>, XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles' in Études de la langue et littérature du moyen âge, offertes à Félix Lecoy, Paris, 1973, pp. 569-83. None of the sources discovered by Professor Van Emden features a king.

name, suggests that he sums up Théophile's notion of monarchy, and that this notion is close indeed to what other writers of the period define as tyranny. Apart from the young lovers and their confidants, all the characters in this play are essentially authoritarian in station and attitude; they are unanimously opposed to the couple's spontaneous and altogether natural bond. The king expects to achieve his every wish by virtue of force: to obtain Thisbé he will kill, even force the object of his so-called 'love' to accept him against her inclination; Racine's Néron is to be conceived of in much the same mould. This king, then, provides an excellent example of all that Cyrano was to combat in the bird-kingdom episode of the Soleil; set against the earlier literary creation, the episode is the easier to gauge in terms of the political thinking of the first half of seventeenth-century France.

Again, Théophile's depiction of the relationship between father and son provides for us an explicit account of the orthodox concept which Cyrano turns upside down in his reversal of those roles in the Lune. Pyrame's father considers that his son owes him a debt for his existence, and on this assumption, forbids the son's love. Likewise, Bersiane, speaking on behalf of the parents of Thisbé, tries to instil in her charge the same unquestioning belief in the necessity of obedience to parents; any action or feeling that vies with such respect constitutes, she says, 'un précipice, un poison, une peste'.<sup>78</sup> By contrast,

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78. Cf. op.cit., I, ii, ll. 85-6; ll. 119-20 and ll. 122-6; also, II, ii. 1.418.

Pyrame's comment on parental attitudes reflects exactly the same criticisms of the aged as is to utter Cyrano's moon philosopher; for both, the decline in physical and mental powers which come inevitably with age renders their judgements completely irrelevant for a young man confident in his superior attributes.<sup>79</sup> Against all these authoritarian figures is pitted a love which exemplifies Nature herself, in all her force and spontaneity, a Nature set in opposition to the contrivances and prejudices of a society which seems not to understand her. Thus, whereas for the King, love is a tyrant, against which his own arbitrary and tyrannical power is useless, for the titular hero and heroine it is life-giving and capable of conquering all obstacles, as symbolized by the wall. Love is a sickness, the cure of which is Death.<sup>80</sup> Pyrame and Thisbé accept the natural bonds of Love and, thereby, break free of the social, political, and even the religious bonds which hamper the other main characters. The opposition between Nature and Authority - a human invention - knits together main theme and the very form of the drama. It is just such an opposition which distances Cyrano, also, from the time-honoured figures of authority, be it God, King or father. There is only one particular in which our parallel breaks down: whereas, for Théophile's young lovers, Reason is seen in contrast to their love, for Cyrano it is the rational man who is the least fettered

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79. Ibid., II, ii, ll. 421-40. Cf. also, Théophile de Viau, Oeuvres poétiques, ed. J. Streicher, Geneva, 1951, I, p.85, 'Satyre première', ll. 65-84.

80. Op.cit., II, i, ll. 345-8.

by the distortions and restrictions of authority. The rational man is an unprejudiced one, free to think whatsoever he pleases, however persecuted he may be, and however much he appears to concede to superior force: 'il vous dira bien qu'il croit, mais il ne croira pas pour cela.'<sup>81</sup>

At first sight a rather different character from Théophile's Pyrame, Séjanus is, perhaps, the nearest equivalent fictional character in the work of Cyrano: freed by love of all ties other than that of love itself, Pyrame is beset upon by authoritarian tyrants whose every act, however contrary to natural law, is sanctioned by the ultimate authority - the gods. Séjanus, whose every act is determined by his political ambition, yet chooses to pit himself against accepted social and religious norms, and to fly in the face of man-made social and political distinctions. Of lowly birth, he dares to regard himself as the equal of Agrippine and the superior in worth of the tyrannical emperor, Tibère; faced with death, he scoffs at the gods and disbelieves in their power to punish him. Perhaps unique in the tragedy of the 1640s and 1650s in expressing noble attitudes without possessing nobility of station, Séjanus, like Cyrano's philosopher, values himself, and is valued, for what he is and for what he does, without reference to social norms. He it is, of all Cyranian fictional characters, who would seem to personify most adequately the author's political credo: ethically, he at once epitomizes the 'levelling' consequences of Cyrano's vision

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81. A.M., p. 59.

of the universe, while being far more ruthless and ambitious than the idealized and less 'living' creations of the moon-men and sun-birds. Born a slave, he acts as though he had always been free; if he seems to be the odd-man-out in the French tragedy of the period, in that, while his social origins are humble his every word and action reflects the pride of the aristocracy, is this not precisely because Cyrano's evaluation of the individual is determined by his ability to realize to the full his potential? The pride of Séjanus is, for him, a part of the enactment of his desires and of his very being.

It is, perhaps, this concept of reason as a freeing agent which renders Cyrano's political ideas impracticable. By the same token, he may be classed with those independent thinkers today described as 'libertins', and of whom Théophile was considered the figure-head. The public condemnation of a thinker such as Théophile, whether or not guilty of the offence for which he had been accused, makes very good political sense. For, on the one hand, the less practical the ideas of indépendants such as he, and Cyrano, the more radical is their satirical import, and, in this, the more potentially disruptive. On the other hand, as Charron had already suggested in his attack on anthropocentric attitudes, man's wish to rule over the animal kingdom is but an extension of the social and political practice

of the more advantaged human being ruling over the less favoured.<sup>82</sup>

The correspondence between the hierarchy of the scale of being and that of socio-political institutions is integral in the medieval universe. The orthodox in the seventeenth century sought to maintain that correspondence, for, once one part of that unified universe is questioned the rest is called into question along with it. The levelling consequences of Cyrano's physical universe impinge on every aspect of human life; in this, the spirit of independence that characterizes the work of Cyrano is in closest bond with that of a Théophile, of a Bussy-Rabutin, or with the attitudes of a Prince de Conti. Ironically, this spirit of revolt is the more seditious that it is not put to practical use: the theories of a Théophile or a Cyrano preserve the candid and pristine quality of the true, and the naive charm of that which has never been, and, perhaps, could never be, transposed into the everyday world. The very nub of their satire lies in the discrediting of all organized groups, creeds, or activities. The modernity of such an outlook is perceptible only in the break which it constitutes with the medieval world; but, while of importance to the historian of ideas, this is not, I think, the chief interest of a Théophile

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82. Pierre Charron, De la Sagesse, Paris, 1783, I, viii, pp. 78-9: 'Un aultre advantage que l'homme prétend sur les bestes est une seigneurie et puissance de commander, qu'il pense avoir sur les bestes: mais oultre que c'est un advantage, que les hommes mesurent et exercent les uns sur les aultres, encores cecy n'est-il pas vray. Car où est ce commander de l'homme, et cet obeyr des bestes? C'est une chimere, et les hommes craignent plus les bestes, qu'elles ne font les hommes.'



or of a Cyrano, in that their concern was human values rather than world-systems as such.

If Cyrano's socio-political framework appears at once cynical and politically unsophisticated, then this coheres with his notion of man: all human systems - social, political, and religious - assume opposed forces in man, of good and evil, and, therefore, incorporate laws dependent upon categories of action deemed good or bad. For Cyrano, however, man is neither good nor evil, but an ever-emerging force, reliant upon his physical complexion in his behaviour, which, of itself, bears no moral stamp at all. To live is good in itself; to live as intensely as possible, expressing as fully as he can the potential determined by the confines of his atomic structure is to attain to the supreme good, whatever the category in which the group would place a man. But, is this self-expression, varied as it may be, quite the same thing as spontaneity?

The real problem is not so much whether man is good or evil, not whether society can shape a man to be cooperative or disruptive, but whether man possesses any freedom of action at all. To what extent can we even posit the concept of free-will in a creature who is but a part of a whole in which chance plays the formative role, and whose physical make-up determines the expression of the soul?

## CHAPTER VI

THE CONCEPT OF FREEDOM AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Throughout the Autre Monde the plea for freedom, both in the expression of ideas and of corporeal desires, is reiterated. A libertinage is advocated, which incorporates the the root meaning of the term in addition to that of unorthodoxy. Yet, what exactly is the nature of that 'liberté' which Cyrano champions, and in how far is such a concept possible in his universe? Is there, indeed, room in a cosmos in which Chance plays the leading role, for a free agent, such as, for instance, free-will?

Given the persistence with which Cyrano scorns all forms of authority, seeing in them above all a curtailment of the individual's freedom of expression, textual references to la liberté are surprisingly few. The Selenians greet each other with the adage, reminiscent of the spirit of the Thelemites's philosophy of life, 'Songés à librement vivre'.<sup>1</sup> Again, in adjudging Cyrano's contemporaries, the daemon prizes most highly Tristan L'Hermite, for, 'c'est le seul Poëte, le seul Philosophe, et le seul Homme libre que vous ayez.'<sup>2</sup> He does not explain his grounds for this judgement, nor the nature of Tristan's freedom. Drawing upon our knowledge of this poet, together with the

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1. A.M., p. 83.

2. A.M., p. 36.

context of the quotation, the quality would seem to consist in an attitude of mind, in the ability not to take notice of external pressures occasioned by social, political, religious, or financial considerations, all of which limit the untrammelled expression of one's self; by their very juxtaposition, there would seem to be inferred some similarity between poet, philosopher, and free man, which one is tempted to define as this very disregard for all creeds.

Such an interpretation coheres with the depiction in La Mort d'Agrippine of Séjanus - an overweeningly ambitious political being who is yet a man dependent ultimately upon no-one. His sole commitment is to himself, and his sole purpose in life to become an all-powerful leader in his own right. His alliance with Agrippine develops largely with this end in view. Likewise, in the letter Contre les Sorciers, Cyrano envisages the philosopher as the very opposite of his contemporary namesake, or of the pedant who claims to be of that station (the latter, in effect, an exaggerated example of the traditional Scholastic philosopher who had already been dismissed as a fool verging on abnormality in the Pedant joué). For Cyrano, to be a philosopher is to possess certain qualities, the foremost of which is independence of mind, not to be a member of a particular body or profession of men. Not only is Cyrano's philosopher an individual who acts upon freely made and rationally grounded decisions, but he is logical and reasonable enough to allow to others a like freedom of choice.<sup>3</sup>

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3. L., pp. 67-8.

It is clear that in every attack made upon authoritarianism, authority is seen to limit the extent to which any individual or group of individuals can express their being, and it is within this context that reason is opposed to it. It goes without saying that authority, by its very nature, must curtail the freedom of the individual, but, what is singularly lacking in Cyrano's thought is the least hint of the usual apology for authoritarianism, namely, that it assures the peaceful co-existence of the members of any social group, and, thus, if not their happiness, at least, their well-being. No such compromise is possible, given Cyrano's moral code, which is precisely that any form of constraint constitutes a threat to one's self-expression, and thus, to Nature's full being; this is the one value which is sacro-sanct, life being revered as such: the quality of life is determined by the force of life or the intensity of being, and not by any socially determined code of behaviour.

While, it is true, one can continue to feel oneself to be whether one is allowed to express aspects of that being or not, expression is an integral part of being. Thus, for example, the moon-priests may succeed in preventing Dyrcona's expression of his beliefs, yet not his holding of them - they cannot prevent his feeling and knowing that what he believes on the basis of his experience, is; yet, even so, they have arrested, to some extent, the actualizing of his potential. For Cyrano, as for Théophile, freedom is essentially spontaneity, and spontaneous self-expression, be it of ideas or of love, is equated with the natural.

All forms of highly organized or patriarchal groups are anathema; to think, to feel, to desire, and to strive to express thoughts, feelings, and desires, are but various aspects of the same state, that of being free.

Freedom consists in lack of constraint. As against this, Cyrano's contemporaries, schooled in philosophical concepts married to theological prerequisites, conceive of it in terms of 'free will'; that is, in terms of the individual vis-à-vis his present area of choice and his future actions. Cyrano, free of theological ties, never mentioned the term 'libre arbitre', let alone discusses the concept, yet, at the same time, conscious always of the whole of Nature while considering the conduct of the separate parts thereof, individual creatures, he never entertains any discussion of the merits of the various forms of government in terms of the relative amount of freedom that they afford the individual. His proposals are geared to the aim of affording all citizens, as all creatures, the maximum absence of constraint.

The lack of detail in Cyrano's outline of the birds' parliament, and its apparent impracticability, is no accident; nor is the lack of mention of free will. All forms of self-expression are good, so that the problem of freedom of choice is morally irrelevant. In the same way, pressures from within in the form of mental, bodily, or psychosomatic conflicts, are not spoken of; in any case, they would witness only to the complexity of a creature's organic structure, and, ideally, each potential act or thought would be expressed. That complexity is good, since the greater the individual's potential, the richer is his sharing in Nature's self-expression. Conflict of

interests and choice have to do with the factor of Time; Cyrano's concept of freedom has not. Spontaneity has always to do with immediacy, and thus, with the present.

One must question, therefore, the relevance of the concept of freedom when understood as freedom from constraint, in any context other than that of the external pressures thrust upon individuals or groups of any species, as for instance, by the heads of institutions, or occasioned by the laws which they have elucidated. However, given that all such authorities necessarily exert limitative pressures, none is good. The wish to be free will alienate creatures from all of them. Only when a regime's laws have as their basis the natural law of fostering life, can that regime be considered as a good one. Yet, logically, even here, the freedom of the individual is infringed. The indictment of the lover from the Royaume des amants for 'murdering' his offspring by not allowing of their conception, stems from a law based upon the reverence for life, yet would constrain the lover to actions which he may not choose to commit; and so, even a morally exemplary law, by the very fact that it exists at all, is a bad one.

Cyrano would probably not have been over much concerned with such a logical nicety as this, even though he does present us with a similar sophism during the bird-trial, where man as a species is described as naturally evil.<sup>4</sup> Unlike post-French-revolutionary man, he never assumes that freedom has to do with the safeguarding of the rights of the individual. It is

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4. A.M., pp. 158-60.

doubtful whether Cyrano is concerned with what we understand by the 'freedom of the individual' at all: it is not a contemporary expression. Personality and individuality are one and the same, being but the expression of our atomic structure. We are in a constant state of becoming, but this very becoming, once actualized, heralds the death of our former selves. To argue, as do the birds - and Séjanus - that our nature after death is the same as that before life, is, indeed, the wryest of assessments of the human condition, for, both prior and subsequent to our life-span our organism's components belonged and will belong, necessarily, to other creatures. Paradoxically, the individual is of importance as an individual just because he is an integral part of the whole which, without him, at the point in time at which he does exist, would be incomplete.

That psychological conflict should be absent from the Autre Monde is not surprising in the light of the complexion of the work, but that it is so from Cyrano's tragedy also, adds point to this observation. The plot of La Mort d'Agrippine consists in a series of deceptions unknown to all the characters save the perpetrators of them, and, for the most part, to the audience too. At best, we are never more than one step ahead of any character: the dramatic force of the play stems from the main characters' conflicting political and personal ambitions, and this is conveyed precisely through the ruses and subterfuge to which they have recourse in order to further them. None of the characters is a prey to warring inner desires: Agrippine is wholly motivated by her wish to avenge the murder of Germanicus,

Tibère, by the determination to retain his throne, and Séjanus, by his endeavours to wrest it from him. Even Livilla, who comes closest, situationally, to the frenetic heroines of the tragédie galante, never wavers; neither does she indulge in self-questioning. Her betrayal of Séjanus originates just as logically in her love of him as had done their former conspiratorial alliance. Tibère understands this singlemindedness and tries to exploit it by forcing her to witness the torturing and death of her lover. Yet, though she is distressed by it, she does not attempt to renounce her responsibility for it, nor indulge in self-recrimination.

Séjanus literally 'upstages' Livilla, Tibère, and Agrippine in the positive manner in which he accepts death. It is this event which is the culminating point in the play and in the self-expression of Séjanus himself.<sup>5</sup> Agrippine and Tibère wittingly rival each other, each claiming the greater fermeté d'âme, but it is Séjanus, finally, who commands the admiration of both the audience and Agrippine herself. For her, he now proves a worthy assassin of the illustrious Germanicus:

Marchez! Je te rends grâce, Ô Rome!  
 D'avoir d'un si grand coeur partagé ce grand Homme;  
 Car je suis seure, au moins, d'avoir vengé le sort  
 Du grand Germanicus par une grande mort.  
 (V, vi, ll. 1573-6)

His worth lies in his attitude and acts, not in his lineage. Of the humblest of origins, Séjanus sees himself as a rightful contender for the empire on account of an ancestry which reaches

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5. Agr., V, vi; see also II, iv. ll. 599-604, and ll. 621-34.



back to the very beginnings of Rome. In other words, is he not a rightful contender, and a worthy one, in the main, by virtue of the force of his desiring that office? It is the power of the emperor after which he strives, rather than the station of emperor.<sup>6</sup> In her appraisal of him, does not Agrippine, at least implicitly, go along with these non-hierarchical moral criteria? One does not have to be an aristocrat to act like one, any more than Cyrano's philosopher has to be vetted by an official body of philosophers to be one. In an apparently typical seventeenth-century political tragedy, then, we discover that the most awesome behaviour, exhibited by a character whose motives are wholly political, has to do with a morality which has the widest ramifications: it is restricted to no class of men, but worthy of emulation by all mankind. In this, it is a-hierarchical and a-social, and it would, therefore, seem no accident that Séjanus is not of noble birth. His fate is not 'destined' in the sense which we commonly lend to the term 'tragic destiny', and he is not a tragic hero in the sense that we lend to that term in accordance with the Greek or Racinian prototype. Nor is the character of Cyrano's heroes and heroine conceived of in the same philosophical mould as is that of the Cornelian hero, despite the apparent similarities between them. The destiny of Séjanus is that of everyman, and the answer to the ultimate problem of the human race - death - an Epicurean one.<sup>7</sup>

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6. Agr., II, iv, ll. 571-88, and ll. 610-16.

7. Cf. Lucretius, De Natura Rerum, Bk. III, ll. 31-93; ll. 830-977. See also Seneca's Troades with its chorus on the post mortem nihil est theme, mentioned above, p. 41 (with note 4).

At first sight, Séjanus puts one in mind of Nicomède; indeed, both characters may have been conceived of dramatically at about the same time (first published in 1654, La Mort d'Agrippine could have been written at any period up to the end of 1653; Corneille's Nicomède was first performed in 1651). Made captive, and their political power removed, both Séjanus and Nicomède, by the sheer force of their desiring to do so, impose their interpretation of events upon those around them. Séjanus is laudable just because he manages to express most forcefully what he is, and what he would desire to be, in the face of the direst adversity. Nicomède is truly généreux in that, like the Stoic sage, he is master of his inner world - his thoughts - and imposes his notion of his situation on the outside world. In both characters, the appearance is the same, that is, of a defiant, and in this, triumphant hero, but the means by which they attain to this admirable position are at variance: in Séjanus all the emphasis is upon his desiring, and upon what he is; in Nicomède it is upon his debates with himself and with his loved-one. Both weigh up and arrange circumstance, but Séjanus is much more radically free than is Nicomède, as the denouement of each play witnesses: Séjanus can take all situations in his stride since he does not fear death; even more, his vision of the world enables him to welcome it. Nicomède has to be rescued by the populace - an outside agent. The greater the externally enforced curbing of the physical disponibility of Séjanus, and that even to the ultimate curb of death, the greater is his mark on those around him, and upon the audience. The

execution of Séjanus pushes the action of La Mort d'Agrippine onto the plane of absolutes, with the culmination of the hero's assertion of self coinciding with his integration into the rest of the universe. Paradoxically, the denouement of Cyrano's tragedy illustrates exactly the same lesson as that which the birds teach Dyrcona as the moment of his capital punishment is drawing near: to feel oneself to be. Séjanus's potential is most fully developed, and his personality realized, at the moment just prior to his death.<sup>8</sup> The equating of death and its aftermath with pre-birth is not merely a piece of bravado on the part of Séjanus, or on that of the birds: like Cyrano's notion of infinity, and like his Spaniard Gonzales's notion of the 'nothing' between particles of matter, it entails what Professor Spink has termed 'a positive idea of non-being'.<sup>9</sup>

It is no accident, then, if psychological conflict is not a feature of La Mort d'Agrippine. All the emphasis in Cyrano's depiction of his heroes and heroine is upon their assertion of what they are, and not upon self-discovery. For the greater part of the play, the main characters attempt to mould circumstance, including other people, to accommodate their desires, and not to bring reason or will-power to bear upon circumstance. Though the effect of their efforts appears to be much the same as the fermeté d'âme of the Cornelian or Cartesian

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8. A.M., pp. 161-2; cf. also pp. 86-7.

9. A.M., pp. 14-15; p. 48. See John S. Spink's article on 'Rochester, Dehénault, Voltaire and a chorus from Seneca's "Troades": Negation as a source of lyricism' in Problèmes des genres littéraires, vol. viii, Lodz, 1966, p.6.

généreux, these characters are created according to a completely different theory of human physiology and psychology.

Nowhere in the Autre Monde either is the idea entertained of the individual acting out his destiny, nor even, as in the world of Tragedy, of any one individual's destiny exemplifying that of Mankind. The young moon philosopher commands over his father not because he cherishes the power that his intellect affords him, but because he and his fellow citizens accept that his youth endows him with superior reasoning power and ability to act. Dyrcona's opinion matters as to the nature of Earth and moon, not because he is Dyrcona, but because all judgements made in the light of experience matter. The young lovers are regarded as begetters of life, the daemon as of a superior race; the philosopher is praised, not for his individuality, but because, certain men, possessed of a superior organic make-up, possess naturally superior qualities to other men, as a class. Identity is determined purely by physical separation from the rest of the universe, and so the freedom of the individual may consist now in independent action, now in the success with which the individual integrates himself with those around him. For, the measure of the individual's worth as of his freedom is the success with which he actualizes his potential, and not the nature or complexity of that potential. This is why society sins against the natural law in bludgeoning any creature into silence or inaction, thereby causing Nature to express less than she is. For Nature can never be less than she is, since, outside of Nature nothing exists. There is no transcendental power; nothing fashions her, nor does she fashion herself: conscious in

all her parts, even she cannot at any one moment be globally conscious of all her parts, save in the sense that all is in all.

This is why all emphasis is placed upon depth and immediacy of sensation and cognition. Even Nature does not escape the relativity imposed upon all her parts by space and Time; she is universally valid, since she is infinite in both these dimensions, but, by the same token, she can only be grasped immanently. Thus, for Cyrano, as for Campanella, 'Cognoscere est esse';<sup>10</sup> the conviction of Dyrcona that he is correct in believing the Moon to be an earth and the Earth a moon, the apprehension of reality of the intellectual cabbage as of the daemon, and the understanding by Dyrcona and the rest of nature of the Language of Truth, all have in common this belief that Truth is experienced, or felt, rather than deduced. The primacy of freedom is contingent upon a natural ethic and Truth itself.

Yet, if Nature cannot be less than she is, can any of her parts be less than they are? For even the force of our desiring is conditioned by our bodily heat, and is, therefore, just as predetermined by our organic structure as is the content of our desiring. Could we not well argue that the expression of our beliefs or desires is itself a form of energy, which, when thwarted by external pressures, must yet be accounted for? Perhaps, for instance, the refusal to allow Dyrcona to express his conviction as to the nature of the Moon necessarily results

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10. This aspect of Cyrano's thought is discussed below, ch. VII, pp. 405-9.

in his holding that conviction all the more intensely?

Spontaneity is natural, constraint a violation of the natural. Nature is free, just as She is what She is: at once like the traditional God, she is all free, and that freedom which she enjoys, as her nature, is necessitated. For her creatures, on the other hand, finite in Time and Extent and separate from, though not hermetically separated from, the rest of her parts, the freedom that is necessity which is their lot, is limitative when compared to the freedom enjoyed either by other species, or by Nature as a whole. Thus, for instance, of all the creatures we encounter in the Lune and the Soleil, the sun inhabitants are the freest, having only to desire to effect a change in their form to enact that change in a twinkling of an eye. The sun-men, due to their fiery nature and habitat, are most successful in actualizing their potential, and, also, the most versatile in their choice of metamorphoses. However, their 'freedom' is just as much necessitated as is Man's lesser endowment of it. Yet even so, given that all creatures are finite and mortal, does not the element of choice of act pose itself, where, in the case of Nature, it is irrelevant? An examination of Cyrano's theory of the emotions will help to elucidate the problem of how far a necessitated freedom is a wholly determined one; can the individual, in other words, ever be conceived of as a free agent?

Sadness, joy, the fear leading to cowardice, and the

audacity of the brave are all accounted for by material forces which produce these emotions directly and automatically; thus, they would seem to manifest themselves in the individual in much the same way as<sup>do</sup> what, today, we differentiatingly term 'reflex' actions, that is to say, actions which occur independently of the particular desires of the person who enacts them. Certain sounds are guaranteed to produce in the hearer feelings of sadness, or courage, or fear, a fact well-known to the military leader who urges his men into battle with the help of trumpet or drum, and well-known too to the bird leaders in the Sun, who find this pattern of cause and effect so reliable that they exploit it as a form of capital punishment: in keeping with his corpuscular theory of sense perceptions, Cyrano conceives of the possibility of causing the body to disintegrate by means of the sadness wrought by the emission of doleful sounds.<sup>11</sup>

Climate, that is, externally applied heat and cold, likewise, can cause feelings of joy and sadness, and do so both in the birds and in Man, as Dyrcona realizes on his arrival in the sun.<sup>12</sup> This second example constitutes a variation on the main theory of the effect of heat or cold, which, while subtler than the basic theory, serving as it does to differentiate between Earth- and Sun-men, obeys the same law; the basic rule is that a greater intensity of heat than the norm produces joy, a lesser amount, sadness, but the

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11. A.M., pp. 58-9; p.156.

12. A.M., p. 152; p.138.

measure of Dyrcona's experience of these two emotions while on the sun is determined by his previous climatic conditioning on earth. For him, too great a heat can have the opposite effect from the usual one.

Cyrano had put this theory to good satirical account when, by means of it, he had discredited the one aspect of warfare which, for the nobleman, makes it a worthwhile occupation: the courage manifested by the soldier in battle. Bravery and cowardice are determined by our bodily heat or lack of it. These emotions come into being automatically, for their intensity or output is directly proportionate to the heat input which occasions them.

The effectiveness of the imagination in producing the bodily changes it desires, likewise, is dependent upon heat, and varies from person to person according to their body's possession of it. Thus Eve cannot overcome gravity as successfully as Adam, women being deficient in the heat intensity naturally afforded the male sex.<sup>13</sup> In the Soleil Cyrano discusses the same problem in more general terms. In jumping into the air, the individual's particular force, determined by the strength of his desire to overcome his bodily weight, vies with the force of gravity, or general law, which maintains men's feet on the ground. The outcome of the struggle is materially determined upon the basis of a single principle. That same principle governs all our acts, as the universe as a whole, and there would seem to be no difference

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13. A.M., p. 23.



in kind between the soldier's bravery, Eve's infirmity and the transparency and freedom from hunger which Dyrcona's body experiences in the fiery, heat-insulating regions of the Sun.<sup>14</sup>

Nor is the force of the imagination a power restricted to the upper rungs on the ladder of being. The birds, it is suggested, perhaps grew wings as a consequence of their intense desire to fly; the phoenix, for its part, flies to the sun only once per century, and this, not because she does not desire to do so more often, but because the weight of the enormous egg she is trying to hatch out outweighs the force of her desiring.<sup>15</sup> Once more, Man is seen to be an integral part of the material whole, and in no way exceptional to universal physical laws. Here the vision is a- rather than anti- anthropocentric.

Yet, is there not a difference between Cyrano's depiction of the force of the imagination and of the emotions, a difference which another glance at the episode of the sun-inhabitants' metamorphoses will reveal? These transformations do not share the completely automatic nature that Cyrano would have us believe is the hallmark of the soldier's conduct; for, they involve two stages, firstly, the decision, made by the sun-men's king as to what they want to change into, secondly, the effecting of the desired change. Likewise, though the lack of success of Eve in reaching the moon does depend upon her bodily composition, this fact does not prevent her wishing

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14. A.M., pp. 136-7; pp. 134-5; p.133.

15. A.M., pp. 148-9.

to do so. In this, these actions differ in nature from the assuming by Dyrcona's body of transparency, for no amount of desiring or decision-making would cause his body either to adopt that state, or to revert to its natural earthly complexion. That the making of decisions consists in a separate operation from the effecting of them is an impression gained from the fact that he affords the sun-people a leader, and that that leader is responsible for the formation and the very living existence of the Homme-Esprit. In addition, the striking similarity between this metamorphosis and the cironalité universelle episode suggests that an examination of these two passages in conjunction will help to elucidate Cyrano's ideas of how our bodies and minds are directed.

The sun-men become, first, the components of a precious-jewelled tree, and then a handsome and perfect young man - the Homme-Esprit, at the instigation of their king. In the ensuing explanation of these metamorphoses, as of a previous one, in which the king became a nightingale and his subjects, variously, eagles and a river, it is made clear that it is the king who directs their actions, and who, initially, decides upon the particular change of form which they will collectively undertake. The description of their previous metamorphosis shows clearly that his leadership is feudalistic both in terminology and concept:

Or tu scauras que mes vassaux voyageoient sous  
 ma conduite, et qu'afin d'avoir le loisir  
 d'observer les choses plus curieusement ...  
 nous nous estions faits oiseaux; tous mes  
 sujets par mon ordre estoient devenus Aigles;

et quant à moy, de peur qu'ils ne s'ennuyassent, je m'estois métamorphosé en Rossignol pour adoucir leur travail par les charmes de la musique.<sup>16</sup>

The earlier circularité universelle theory, expounded in the Lune, consists, despite the main thesis that there exist an infinity of worlds within an infinity of worlds, for the main part, in an attempt to explain the physiology of the human being, which closely parallels the description of the Homme-Esprit. The human body, it is suggested, possesses a leader, a directive agent, which also imparts life to the organism, itself consisting in a vast quantity of 'cirons', themselves perhaps containing other, smaller worlds of 'mites' within them:

Peut-estre que nostre chair, nostre sang et nos esprits ne sont autre chose qu'une tissure de petits animaux qui s'entretiennent, nous prestent mouvement par le leur, et se laissant aveuglement conduire à nostre volonté qui leur sert de cocher, nous conduisent nous-mesme et produisent tout ensemble cette action que nous appellons la vie.<sup>17</sup>

While the explanation of sensation by means of mites is surmise, in the case of the formation of the handsome youth Dyrcona witnesses the enlivening of the organism and the assumption of leadership over it by the sun-men's king.

Quand ce beau grand jeune Homme fut entièrement finy ... je vis entrer par la bouche, le Roy de tous les peuples dont il estoit un cahos, encor il me semble qu'il fut attiré dans ce corps par la respiration du corps mesme. Tout

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16. A.M., p. 142.

17. A.M., p. 71.

cet amas de petits Hommes n'avoit point encor auparavant donné aucune marque de vie; mais si-tost qu'il eut avalé son petit Roy, il ne se sentit plus estre qu'un.<sup>18</sup>

In both episodes the leader plays the role of active principle. The sun-king is of the same fiery nature as his subjects who, despite being directed by him, remain autonomous creatures; likewise, the mites are capable of independent action, a fact illustrated by the disruptions which they can cause in the organism when they war with each other, and which the human being who is comprized of them calls 'illness'. The sun inhabitants remain independent living creatures throughout their metamorphoses; they it is, presumably, who, by their very life-force, cause the young man to breathe even before he has been imbued with life by his - and their - leader. Thus, sun-king and, in the cironalité passage, volonté exert above all an organizing capacity and a directive power which is, in effect, the faculty which makes choices on behalf of the group, or organism. And so the worlds in worlds parallel serves now to explain automatic actions, now willed ones, and even to account for illness or disruption caused in the larger organism, by a variety of willed actions in the smaller ones which it contains. For, all our actions, as does the leadership of the sun-king, or desiring (willing) in the human being or in his components, stem from exactly the same principle - that of heat - and from the same source - the fiery atom, the activating force of fire itself being equated with soul, be that the individual or world - soul, be it the source of the movement of the mite within the body, or the body within the corporate

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18. A.M., pp. 141-2.

entity, Nature.

Each body is microcosmic and contains all its possibilities within it. The only decisive factor in the outcome of any internal conflict is the relative forces of the components' desiring. To talk of the force of our imagination as the determinant in any issue is, for Cyrano, but the same as to talk of the end-product of our desiring; both vantage points coincide. Thus, for instance, when he discusses the problem of illness and its cure, he dismisses the role of the medical practitioner, save insofar as the patient believes in that role, since the ability to get well is just as much determined by the patient as is the risk of his dying. For, within his body there exist, naturally, components, which he calls 'natural balms', just as there exists always the possibility of disintegration, due to the warring of the mites within him. The reference to illness in the cironalité passage concurs with the explanation given by the young moon philosopher of ultimate death or the recovery of health.<sup>19</sup> As in all our other behaviour, the determinant is the force of our desiring.

Thus, the distinctions made by Cyrano's contemporaries between free willed and coerced or unfree acts, as between mind and matter, are irrelevant in Cyrano's monistic system. Likewise, the problem of making choices hardly needs to be entertained. At one and the same time, we are responsible for our fate and unable to alter it. The attitude we adopt

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19. A.M., pp. 92-3; c.f. A.M., pp. 72-3.

to it will depend upon whether we view our destiny subjectively or objectively. While in attempting to explain the interaction of body and mind Cyrano retains the traditional concepts of leader and led, which he does away with in all practical details concerning human institutions, modelling them upon Nature herself, the retention of such terminology is no longer reflected in the import of the terms. For, there is no difference in kind between them but only in function. The levelling effect of his physical and social 'monism' obtains in his account of the functioning of the body, mind soul and volonté, sun-king and human 'coachman', all being evaluated on exactly the same level, governed as they are by a single principle. Indeed, it should be no surprise to discover that Man, in a universe in which all is in all, is governed by exactly the same set of laws in his behaviour as is the rest of the cosmos.

While for a Descartes or even Gassendi, all emphasis is upon judgement, for Cyrano it is wholly upon desire. For Descartes, will presupposes free will, whereas, for Cyrano, will is tantamount to the force of desiring itself, beyond which there is no other motivating force or directive. All the emphasis in Descartes's ethics is upon decision-making, the intentions behind our acts determining both their authenticity and their moral worth. Specific intentions and the choice between various possible courses of action are niceties that lie outside of Cyrano's thought: for him also, of course, our intentions lie within our power, but this is self-evident and an unimportant aspect of action, given that all that we

do follows necessarily upon what we are at any point in time. It is highly debatable whether, in Cyrano's view, we can desire something outside our reach, the very nature of our wishes being as dependent upon an imaginative faculty, atomically shaped, as the force of the desiring. At any rate, we can state that no character in the Autre Monde ever does indulge in such fancy - save Eve. Cyrano's concept of freedom is akin to that which was to be adopted by Locke and by his disciple, Voltaire, who argues in his Dictionnaire philosophique that 'la liberté n'est donc autre chose que le pouvoir de faire ce que je veux'. Again, while for Descartes 'il suffit de bien juger pour bien faire', for Cyrano it suffices to act to act well.<sup>20</sup>

Such moral determinism does not rule out, however, the notion that we are free agents; in a sense all creatures are free insofar that they all consist in a compound of atoms naturally dynamic, each of which is the centre of its own activity. The fiery atom is all free in that both the direction and force of its movement is a property of its being. In this, Cyrano's 'determinism' is of a quite different nature from that of the mechanist, and his notion of freedom different both in concept and operation from that of a moral theorist such as Descartes. It is the interaction of atoms which determines behaviour, and this may never form an observable pattern over time, the number of atoms being infinite and, despite the finite number of their shapes, their collective movements being so diverse as to appear random. Similarly,

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20. Voltaire, op. cit., article on 'De la Liberté'; Descartes, Discours de la Méthode, ed. G. Gadoffre, Manchester, 1941, Part III, p. 27.

he has no need to resort to a Cartesian explanation of the passions, there being no set of mechanistic natural laws and there being no difference in kind between mind and matter. The dynamic atom assures unpredictability if not true indifference of choice. The pineal gland is so vital in the system of Descartes just because, being capable of being moved by the 'mind', it allows of the possibility of change of direction, and thus, of the exercising of free choice and action - that is, the impinging of the mind on otherwise mechanistically propelled matter.<sup>21</sup> For Descartes, the quantity of motion in the universe is constant, but the direction of motion is not included in this law; for Leibniz, it is, so that the possibility of the direction of the motion of the 'spirits' into the nerves is, for him, not free. Cyrano's monistic materialism allows of a kind of 'freedom' impossible in the monadological system of Leibniz, but different in nature from a Cartesian's understanding of the word. For Cyrano, all that happens in the universe is the result of random motion, or Chance. To feel the need of allowing for changes in the direction of matter is meaningless in a universe in which everything is changing all the time, due to an immanentist dynamism.

Whether we choose to label Cyrano's conception of the universe and of each creature within it determinist or indeterminist depends very much upon our vantage point; in

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21. See the Traité de l'Homme where Descartes explains his theory on the function of the pineal gland. See in Paris particular, Descartes, OEuvres et Lettres (Pléiade ed.), 1952, pp. 854, 858, and 859. ✓



any case, it is not, for him, the real point at issue. Democritean, his universe is determined in every detail by what Cyrano states as being the decisive factor in shaping the world and our behaviour, namely, atomic movement. As Colonna, an eighteenth-century exegesist of Democritus, writes: 'Tout ce qui se produit et se fait dans le monde, arrive par une nécessité fatale et immuable; c'est à dire, par une suite nécessaire de mouvemens des atômes'. That very necessity, however, is determined by a dynamism which, according to Colonna, Democritus had equated with the divine principle, which, by virtue of the dissimilar shapes of the atoms, assures a random nature to their conjoined movement. Though random, that movement is not blind, since the divine principle immanent in all matter is 'un être qui se meut avec connoissance'.<sup>22</sup> For Cyrano, by contrast, that dynamism is as material - being itself atomically determined - as is the rest of matter. Even so (and given that Colonna's interpretation is accurate),<sup>23</sup> Cyrano's atomism is Democritean in spirit, coming closer to

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22. Francesco M.P. Colonna, Les principes de la Nature, Paris, 1725, vol. I, p. 88; p. 94.

23. Whether Democritus did endow matter with a divine principle is a moot point. Bruno did not think so, for he says in the third Dialogue of the Causa that he gave up following the Pre-Socratics, and in particular, Democritus, precisely because they left no room for the spiritual in their account of the universe (see G. Bruno, Opere, ed. A. Guzzo, Milan, n.d., p. 355).

him than to either Lucretius or Gassendi. . . .  
 . . . . . Lucretius's atoms being non-dynamic, he had to posit  
 the clinamen to afford downward moving atoms the chance to  
 amalgamate, and to the universe an element of freedom in that  
 random creation of bodies; he makes it clear that the clinamen  
 also accounts for free will.<sup>24</sup> Gassendi could dispense with  
 the clinamen since his 'Christianizing' of Epicureanism  
 consisted precisely in positing a providential God who is  
 responsible both for the initiation and the direction of the  
 movement of the atoms. . . . In this way God's will is imprinted  
 on Nature, the atoms being the vehicle of the realization of  
 the divine plan. . . . However, once initiated, this movement  
 followed, and continues to follow, an internal physical law  
 without divine intervention. . . . Cyrano, for his part, can dis-  
 pense both with the clinamen and with the divinity, since his  
 atoms are eternal and dynamic, their movement being determined  
 wholly by their shape. . . . The consciousness which, according  
 to Colonna, is regarded in the Democritean system as divine,  
 is not far removed from the sentience which Cyrano conceives  
 of as part and parcel of an atom's dynamism; every part of the  
 cosmos is alive and responsible for its own being. . . . The  
 semblance of freedom is thus lent to all our actions, since,  
 for us, as for everything else, spontaneity is built into the  
 system. . . . This unpredictability is emphasized still further  
 by Cyrano's conception of time, again, perhaps, a reminiscence  
 of Democritus who, according to Colonna, 'ne connoissoit que

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24. De Natura Rerum, Bk. II, ll. 216-93.

la vie présente'.<sup>25</sup> Unlike the evolutionist, for whom chance is part of the continuing process of evolvement, Cyrano puts emphasis on the disjuncture of moments or periods in the individual's life, and so tends to lend to his every action the semblance of prior choice, that is, of a spontaneity that is not without some psychological consequence. It is significant that, though he is clearly cognizant of Lucretius's poem, he sees no need to account for free will here: for him, willing and desiring are one and the same activity.

Despite the fact that freedom is necessity, no character in the Autre Monde, any more than in La Mort d'Agrippine, ever abrogates his responsibility for his acts. The willingness to adopt an attitude of responsibility results from a conviction rather than from a consideration of physiological facts, and in spite of episodes like the cironalité universelle account or the metamorphoses of the sun inhabitants. Yet even here, there is a reflection of Cyrano's physics in that responsibility would seem to take on its root meaning of 'response to' rather than <sup>of</sup> being bound to any institutionally determined ethical code. All creatures are required to be responsive to their own desires, and to the expression of their desires of other living things. Thus it is that the bird king's affective nature is all-important, and that the bird who cannot make a friend is universally condemned. Thus it is that the bird-judge admits that Dyrcona cannot help being a man, but yet, while lacking the reasoning ability necessary to

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25. Op. cit., p. 95.

perceive the error of his ways, he can help - and should be held responsible for - wanting to commit evil acts.<sup>26</sup>

This last example witnesses to Cyrano's understanding of the position of the judge in any law-court which admits of the defence's plea of diminished responsibility; at first glance appearing as specious as many of the Scholastic case arguments that Cyrano elsewhere ridicules, the bird-prosecutor's/ shows awareness of the practicalities of administering justice. It reveals too, Cyrano's affective attitude to freedom, and his insistence upon our responsibility for our behaviour. In this, his moral stand-point is akin to that which Diderot will adopt in his Rêve de d'Alembert: though the continuous movement of matter in the universe determines conduct, so that what is generally understood as a virtuous or as an evil act results from the accident of birth, moral worth is of the utmost importance; a century before Diderot, Cyrano accepts as the criterion of moral worth a reverence for, and encouragement of, life.

Cyrano's attitude is much closer to that of his contemporaries in this aspect of his morality than is his position on physical or spiritual questions. Though his moral theories are basically Epicurean, in the bird-prosecutor's diatribe all emphasis is laid upon rectitude of intention. In this, he is at one with the more pragmatic Descartes revealed in his letters to the Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia, and, more particularly still, in those to Christina of Sweden. A letter

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26. A.M., pp. 159-60.

to Christina dated 20th November, 1647, shows that by the time of the probable composition of Cyrano's Lune, Descartes, for his part, had recognized that human acts cannot be usefully judged according to the universally valid standard of morality which he understood by the term 'Sovereign Good', since no human being possesses sufficient knowledge always to follow, let alone to recognize, that 'right' path, even when the rectitude of his intentions cannot be called into question. Our will power, by contrast, is, in Descartes's opinion, always at our disposal, even though, through ignorance or ill fortune, a particular course of action may not be.<sup>27</sup> The similarity of outlook here between Descartes and Cyrano is of interest largely because, in all other respects, their vantage point and assumptions are quite different. It consists in a psychological reaction to a very practical problem rather than in their basic theories: The problems faced by Descartes when he differentiates between 'solid contentment' and 'contentment' arise just because he believes in the existence of an absolute standard of good and evil. Such a stand-point is logically impossible in Cyrano's case, since all, except the natural propensity to give rather than to take life, is relative, all phenomena, mental or physical, being immanently initiated in an infinite cosmos.

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27. See Descartes, Oeuvres et Lettres, ed. cit., p. 1282. Here, Descartes lends to 'Sovereign Good' a less absolute value than he had done two years' previously, in a letter to Princess Elisabeth dated 4th August, 1645 (see ibid., pp. 1194-5).

This same example, taken from the bird-prosecutor's speech, reveals one last problem as to our responsibility for our acts which it is extremely difficult to answer, owing in large measure to Cyrano's own ambiguity on the subject. How far is the individual bound by the characteristics of his species? To what extent may an individual creature justly be held responsible for traits which typify his kind? Surely such traits are as much the responsibility of Mother Nature as - at least, in Cyrano's opinion - a man's belief or disbelief in God is God's responsibility. Just such questions as these are raised, and left unsolved, by the bird-trial; for the birds maintain that Nature has actually allowed to be created, and embraces, a creature whose natural propensities lead him to transgress her moral code.

On the one hand, the birds condemn Dyrcona for being a Man: for them, all members of that species are, by definition, cruel monsters; on the other, Margot the magpie, the only bird willing to act as his defence counsel, attempts to exonerate him on the factual ground that he is atypical of his species, having attempted to save her while she lived on Earth. There is clearly a contradiction in terms here, in so far that Nature whose ends are the preservation and begetting of life, and who requires in her parts a reverence for the whole of her (i.e. a reverence for life), should 'create' a species which goes against her best interests. That Cyrano is not unaware of this paradox is an impression borne out by a statement made by Prosecuting Counsel in the middle of his attack on Man:

Je pense, Messieurs, qu'on n'a jamais révoqué

en doute que toutes les créatures sont produites par nostre commune Mère, pour vivre en société. Or si je prouve que l'homme semble n'estre né que pour la rompre, ne prouveray-je pas qu'allant contre la fin de sa création, il mérite que la Nature se repente de son ouvrage?

A little later in the same speech we are left in no doubt that man's anthropocentrism, yet another manifestation of his inability to live in Nature's society, is a trait for which ultimately Nature herself is responsible, and yet for which Cyrano's birds nonetheless hold Man responsible:

Voilà le bel effet de cette fantastique Monarchie et de cet empire si naturel de l'Homme sur les animaux et sur nous-mêmes; car son insolence a esté jusques-là. 28

By disallowing the magpie's projected role of defence counsel the birds place all emphasis upon the failings of the human race, assimilating a part of that race - Dyrcona - to the whole. And so, prosecuting counsel argues that, just as, if he were a monkey, Dyrcona would always retain an instinctive response to grimacing and to nonsensical acrobatics by behaving likewise, so he must be condemned by the same token, it being assumed that a man will always act like a man, that is, cruelly. That Dyrcona has, in fact, acted otherwise is conveniently glossed over. The end-product is a dual means of making the point that Nature demands that all her creatures should live in harmony, revering life. The apparent determinism, which would tend to support the birds' attitude, is offset by the final part of the Prosecutor's speech which once more bears out the

contention that, for Cyrano, a man, while determined by his make-up, (including necessarily the characteristics of his species, atomically defined), seems to have, within those bounds, an unlimited area of choice. Thus it is that the parliament of birds is advised by the bird-lawyer not to hold Dyrcona responsible for his lack of intelligence, since this is his birthright, but to pass judgement upon those actions which are motivated by his will. Man as a species cannot help being a fool; he cannot help his attitude even towards the animal kingdom, but he can help wanting to be, and engaging all his desire in being, evil. Here, Cyrano's assessment of human behaviour operates on three rather than two levels: the substance of all men; the accidents which are prevalent in all men; and those accidents peculiar to individuals. By creating the second rather specious category and ignoring the third, Prosecuting counsel obtains the required verdict of 'guilty'.

The idea of man's being naturally evil is an obvious Christian left-over of which Cyrano is aware; indeed, he makes use of the traditional argument of original sin in the panegyric of the intellectual cabbage.<sup>29</sup> There, it reflects Cyrano's basic disposition as a critic of contemporary society and, of course, as a writer of satirical works. It has no place,

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29. A.M.; p. 68: 'Ajustés à cela qu'il [l'homme] ne scauroit naistre sans crime, estant une partie du premier homme qui le rendit coupable, mais nous scavons fort bien que le premier chou n'offensa pas son Créateur au Paradis Terrestre'.



however, in its own right in Cyrano's conception of the universe. Nature is a unity consisting of the whole of her parts. Thus, evil or good conceived of as absolutes have no meaning for him. Nature, unlike the Christian God, is not a transcendental power, so that, by modern notions of logic, it is impossible for man to be by his very nature a creature who acts against Nature's design. Nature is what she is. Crimes can only relate to laws appertaining to a particular society. Sins do not exist in such a world. That Cyrano is aware of all these issues is borne out by all that we have so far noticed about his work; and yet, he makes it equally plain towards the beginning of the bird episode that man's character, monstrous and feeble as it is, is an integral part of Nature's being, when he describes him as 'l'Homme enfin que la Nature, pour faire de tout, a créé comme les Monstres, mais en qui pourtant elle a infus l'ambition de commander à tous les animaux et de les exterminer'.<sup>30</sup> What we are witnessing here is just one more instance of the paradox inherent in the principle of plenitude, and which Cyrano exploits to the full for his own satirical purposes.

This is the closest that Cyrano comes to allowing of the concept of evil. He does not resort to it so much for its own sake, however, but rather in order to convey a moral directive to his reader, namely, to value all forms of life. According to his monistic explanation of the universe, the birds' case is a nonsense. Cyrano makes use of a doctrine

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30. A.M., p. 150.

which is essentially a theistic one, in a context quite alien to it. It is of use precisely because of its inherent paradox, yet, ironically, when applied to a wholly materialistic world-system the anomalies associated with it need no longer obtain. All the emphasis is placed upon a moral directive, then, and not upon the philosophical categories which serve to express it.

A corroboration of these findings is to be found in the earlier novel, when the young moon philosopher dismisses the Christian notion of sin. In terms reminiscent of the Quatrains du Déiste, he argues that God can hardly condemn his creatures for being what He, after all, has made them. To sin, one must either be aware that one is so doing, or want to do so. If we do not know God, that is God's fault, for it is He who has denied us the capacity to know Him. The lunar philosopher scorns the 'hidden God' dogma; this is tantamount to playing hide-and-seek with His creatures. Such a God must be either malicious or stupid. In exactly the same rhetorical manner as in the intellectual cabbage episode, Cyrano makes use of one Christian premise to dismiss another: the argument rests on the assumption that God created each person, and thus, that He determined the nature of that person's organs and soul. In other words, if we accept personal providence, we cannot justly be held responsible to our creator for our qualities or lack of them, nor for the conduct which, in Cyrano's scheme of things, must necessarily stem from them.<sup>31</sup> By analogy, how can the birds or Nature hold Man, or one representative of the

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31. A.M., p. 96.

species - Dyrcona - responsible for his acts? As we have seen, they do forgive him for his inbuilt propensity, but, and this is in direct parallel to the argument of the lunar philosopher, not for willed malice. It is the nomenclature that renders the bird prosecutor's case somewhat specious then, that is, the use of the word 'evil' in a manner acceptable in the framework of Neoplatonic thought, but not that of Cyrano himself. It is, perhaps, significant that the young moon philosopher does not even mention free will: the logical strength of his case would make that concept appear still more nonsensical than the 'stultitia' of the hidden God.

From a purely rational viewpoint, Cyrano's monism must rule out freedom of indifference. In an universe in which all movement ultimately depends upon the immanent dynamic impetus of variously shaped atoms, and in which thought is but an expression of those same atoms, the change of direction of matter which constitutes a change of mind is no way different in kind from any other phenomenon. Yet, the very random nature of the conjunction of atoms into organisms or into physical or mental act, assures unpredictability. The fluidity of our thoughts and acts appears as spontaneous and immediate as does the coming into being and disintegration of the living organisms responsible for them. The playing on the notion of evil by the bird-prosecutor relies upon two separate ways of envisaging a man, and then deliberately confusing the two, as we have seen. It is only as a member of the group known as the human species that any man could be accused of evil; the individual, as conceived by Cyrano, should never abrogate responsibility for his acts, but, logically, it is only a group-pressure that can

cause him to be less, or other, than he is by nature.

The ultimate logical conclusion to Cyrano's picture of the world would be a universe in which no institutions existed. All human groups are evil in direct proportion to the extent, complexity, and enforcement of their communal laws; for adherence to any externally determined code, be it a family, social, political, or religious one, involves a curbing of that random 'becoming' which constitutes life. Making decisions, a form of desiring, is an integral part of that becoming, as is illustrated by the metamorphoses of the sun-inhabitants. It is illustrated too by the character Séjanus who is the most admirable and, one suspects, for Cyrano, the most worthy character in La Mort d'Agrippine just because he expresses most forcefully what he is and what he desires. In this sense, the political ambitions of Séjanus are in no way limiting, though, had they been realized, they would have caused him to limit the expression of the populace over whom he would gladly exert a tyrannical rule. (Here, there is a discrepancy between him and the model philosopher conceived of in the Lettre contre les Sorciers; however, in this, Séjanus may well sum up Cyrano's notion of a politically motivated person. In any case, we are dealing with two different forms of writing: to impute to the playwright the beliefs of his fictitious characters is a critical fallacy; even in the Autre Monde, where the work has an obvious didactic role as well as one of diversion, a character's beliefs are markers to those of its author only in so far that they are considered in conjunction with the tone in which they are uttered - stylistically determined - and with the content of the work as a whole.)

It is very clear that, on the one hand, Cyrano knew well how to exploit logic and rhetoric to make a satirical point, while, on the other, he does willingly resort to those paradoxes and logical niceties imputable to the commonplace doctrine of the coincidence of contraries. To what extent is this doctrine used for satirical purposes and to what for its epistemological import? Does Cyrano have a theory of knowledge, and, if so, in what does it consist?

## CHAPTER VII

THE CONCEPT OF TRUTH: CYRANO'S MONISM AS A BASIS  
FOR A THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

A favourite topic of Cyranian scholarship in the last twenty years has been epistemology: What was Cyrano's theory of knowledge, and how did he conceive of Truth? First broached as a theme in its own right by Dr. Annette Lavers, in an article of 1958, it becomes a central question in the study of Erica Harth, and is touched on in the third part of Madeleine Alcover's book.<sup>1</sup>

Largely on the basis of the sun-spot episode, in which Dyrcona learns of and immediately comprehends the universal language of Truth, Annette Lavers had argued that Cyrano appears as a 'dogmatist', who believes that man may attain to a 'satisfactory' knowledge of reality.<sup>2</sup> Published within three months of each other, in 1970, the studies of Drs. Harth and Alcover are particularly interesting here, since they offer diametrically opposed responses to the account of Mrs. Lavers: while Madeleine Alcover builds on it, Erica Harth dismisses

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1. See A. Lavers, 'La croyance à l'unité de la science dans "l'Autre Monde" de Cyrano de Bergerac' in Cahiers du Sud, 45th year (1958), no. 349, pp. 406-16; E. Harth, Cyrano de Bergerac and the Polemics of Modernity, New York, 1970, ch. 3; M. Alcover, La Pensée philosophique et scientifique de Cyrano de Bergerac, Geneva, 1970, pp. 151-5.
  2. Op.cit., p. 411.

its claims summarily. It is the radical difference between these assessments of Cyrano's theory of knowledge which suggests that a reexamination of the subject is desirable.

Dr. Alcover states that Cyrano is not a sceptic. He does believe that man can perceive the Truth. If he does not always arrive at knowledge in practice, this is because the ideal means of knowing is instinctive and non-rational. For Nature is Truth. The daemon is superior to man on account of his greater range of sensitive faculties: he knows without reasoning. However, argues Madeleine Alcover, since reason consists in interpreting sense-data, it can make up for man's sensual deficiencies. She concludes:

En imaginant son Démon, Cyrano entendait nous démontrer que la vérité n'est pas une réalité surnaturelle. Elle reste dans l'Autre Monde une réalité accessible à l'homme. C'est ... l'affirmation que l'homme n'a pas toujours la connaissance de la vérité, mais qu'il peut y parvenir.

Cette conclusion est l'opposé du scepticisme. C'est une attitude positive de l'homme en face de la science. Dans L'Autre Monde que nous définissons comme une quête de la vérité, Cyrano est un enthousiaste qui cherche le vrai et qui sait qu'on pourra le trouver.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Harth argues that Cyrano is a sceptic relativist who believes that man cannot attain to a knowledge of reality, but only to partial truths. It is precisely in this attitude that Cyrano's 'modernity' lies, in her view; she compares it to Gassendi's pyrrhonism on the one hand, and, in a briefer mention, to the outlook of the eighteenth-century philosophes on the other.<sup>4</sup> The basis of Cyrano's epistemology lies,

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3. Op. cit., p. 154.

4. Op. cit., pp. 131-3, and Introduction.

suggests Erica Harth, in his adoption of the Copernican system and in his belief in the plurality of worlds. It is on these grounds that she rules out Annette Lavers's interpretation of Cyrano's theory of knowledge:

For Cyrano, the similarity of the formerly disparate planets and the possibility of a plurality of worlds have shattering epistemological consequences. If the moon is an earth and the other orbs are peopled by creatures resembling us, we must relinquish any claim to absolute truth and acknowledge the fact of relativism. In his article on the Autre Monde, A. Lavers pictures Cyrano in pursuit of a pure universal Truth. Nothing could be further removed from the mentality of the follower of Copernicus. The relativism which Henri Weber views as an aspect of Cyrano's rationalism is one of the major themes of the Autre Monde.<sup>5</sup>

Clearly, a premise of this judgement is that belief in the relativity of all observable truths and belief in the universality of Truth are mutually exclusive.

Each of these three scholars emphasizes different episodes in the novels: Mrs. Lavers, the sun-spot experiences, Madeleine Alcover, the encounter with the Socratic daemon, and Erica Harth, the cosmology favoured by Dyrcona. This notwithstanding, their varying assessments of Cyrano's theory of knowledge still seem to be irreconcilable. In any case, if we impute the disparity to this difference in the selection of material are we not saying, in effect, that Cyrano was inconsistent? This does not seem to me to be a satisfactory explanation, and especially not so in so far that, in all other respects, Cyrano's thought has shown itself to be far more consistent than critics have hitherto allowed. Is it not, perhaps, more likely

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5. Ibid., pp. 136-7.



that there is a large element of truth in all three theories, but that no one of them constitutes a complete picture? At any rate, such a striking variation of interpretation does raise certain questions: Is our twentieth-century notion of logic and of epistemology not, perhaps, somewhat different from that of the seventeenth-century Western mind? In particular, did Cyrano's contemporaries draw such a hard and fast line between the Pyrrhonian and the dogmatic approach to truth as my own appraisal of the three studies in question, or as each of the three authors of them, tend to do? Richard Popkin's investigation of The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes (Assen, 1960) would seem to point to the fact that they did not. Gassendi's avowed position - namely, to be 'media inter dogmaticos et scepticos' - epitomizes this easy movement between, or amidst, apparently diametrically opposed concepts of reality.<sup>6</sup>

On a wider tack, how far is it accurate to talk of Cyrano's having an 'epistemology' at all? Did he think in such terms? The consensus of Cyranian critics, including the three ladies just mentioned, agree that his imaginative works contain nothing remotely suggestive of a 'metaphysics'; are we not, perhaps, wishing upon him a theory of knowledge? To put

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6. Gassendi adopted this position by the time he wrote the Syntagma philosophicum, published posthumously in 1658. see ibid., Part I, Bk. II, ch. v, quoted by Henri Berr in his Du scepticisme de Gassendi (translated from a Latin original by B. Rochot), Paris, 1960, p.100. See also R.H. Popkin, op.cit., ch. VII, pp. 142-53.

it another way, all that we have observed so far in this study points to a writer preoccupied with moral values; what, if anything, gives us grounds for believing that he was concerned with the veracity of our sensual or mental experience?

The notion of infinity pervades the Autre Monde and it is this wholehearted acceptance of an infinite world-vision together with his sensationist materialism which constitutes the basis of Cyrano's notion of reality. The infinite is posited in three main ways: by supposing the actual existence of a physically infinite universe containing an infinite plurality of sun-centred worlds; in his explanation of human physiology, where he puts forward the theory that there exist even more minute worlds within worlds within each visible creature, and notably within Man; in positing a universe which is not only spatially infinite but is also so materially - there being an infinite number of atoms, though not of atomic shapes, and is so in terms of time - prime matter being non-created. Only the expression of the infinite as a mathematical concept is lacking, though such an omission is, of course, typical of Cyrano's thinking.

The only finite and eternally delineated entities in the universe are the atom and Nature, the complexion and possibilities of the latter being determined by the intrinsic possibilities of the former. Given the infinite number of atoms, the possible combinations of them over time are, despite their finite number of shapes, so great as to take on the appearance of an almost infinite variety, but Nature is saved from being a purely nominal, and otherwise meaningless,

collective noun, by the existence of this one finite element in the universe which she comprises. It is within this context that the 'all in all' theory is asserted. For, the universe is bounded by no creature, nor any principle, and cannot, by virtue of its infinity, be maintained by any power or being external to it. Its dynamism being materially determined and immanent in all matter, the providential as well as the creative functions of God are assumed by Nature, so that God becomes redundant. Thus, necessarily, All is in One, and the One, now as the fiery world-soul, and now as Nature itself, is in all,

It is Dyrcona who, in his talk with the Viceroy of Canada, hasards the hypothesis that the universe is infinite, and contains an infinite number of sun-centred galaxies. Here, the theory is presented within a Christian context, for the terms of the argument all parallel closely arguments that had been used by the most famous exponent of such a world-vision, Giordano Bruno, in his De l'Infinito and the De Immenso. While we have no evidence for maintaining that Cyrano knew the Nolan's work, we can state, this similarity exists. In any case, as Professor Lovejoy points out:

Though the elements of the new cosmography had ... found earlier expression in several quarters, it is Giordano Bruno whom must be regarded as the principle representative of the doctrine of the decentralized, infinite, and infinitely populous universe; for he not only preached it throughout Western Europe with the fervour of an evangelist, but also first gave a thorough statement of the grounds on which it was to gain acceptance from the general public.<sup>7</sup>

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7. The Great Chain of Being, Cambridge, Mass., 1936, p. 116.

In addition, it is noteworthy that this is not an isolated example of parallels between these two thinkers' world-vision, though this, along with the prominence given to the belief in a world-soul immanent in all matter, is the most crucial of them; for on these two assumptions the similar concept of the universe and of those who inhabit it depends. In one particular, however, the two systems do diverge and this divergence is an equally crucial aspect of the philosophy of each, namely, in the attitude taken to, and, in the case of Bruno, the acceptance of, the spiritual. A comparison of the two will help to elucidate the particular nature and ramifications of Cyrano's vision of the world.

Cyrano's hypothesis that the universe is infinite witnesses not only to an acceptance of the principle of plenitude but also to an awareness of all its logical consequences. Like the characters in the two Dialogues of Bruno cited above,<sup>8</sup> Dyrcona argues that God's infinite nature implies that His creation, likewise, be infinite; to the viceroy of Canada's objection that belief in the plurality of worlds leads to the positing of an infinite universe, Dyrcona replies in the affirmative and exclaims:

N'en doutés point ... comme Dieu a peu faire  
 l'Ame immortelle, il a peu faire le Monde  
 infiny, s'il est vray que l'Eternité n'est  
 rien autre chose qu'une durée sans bornes,  
 et l'infiny une estenduë sans limites: Et  
 puis, Dieu seroit finy luy-mesme, supposé  
 que le Monde ne fut pas infiny, puisqu'il  
 ne pourroit pas estre où il n'y auroit rien,  
 et qu'il ne pourroit acroistre la grandeur

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8. See De l'infinito universo e mondi, III, and De Immenso, I, 9, quoted from by A.O. Lovejoy, op.cit., p. 117.

du Monde qu'il n'adjoutast quelque chose à sa propre étendue, commençant d'estre où il n'estoit pas auparavant. Il fault donc croire que, comme nous voyons d'icy Saturne et Jupiter, si nous estions dans l'un ou dans l'autre, nous descouvririons beaucoup de mondes que nous n'appercevons pas d'icy, et que L'Univers est éternellement construit de cette sorte.<sup>9</sup>

The 'nothingness' of infinite space is envisaged as just as much an affirmative 'something' as is infinite time and as the plurality of sun-centred worlds themselves, adequate 'proof' of the existence of which is provided, in Dyrcona's opinion, by his interplanetary journeyings. And so, while Cyrano does not, as does Bruno, make of space a substance (ether), his description of it as 'un néant' is, just as when he uses the notion for death,<sup>10</sup> more terminological than real, and Cyrano is quite aware of this.

To the viceroy's retort, 'Ma foy ... vous avés beau dire, je ne sçaurois du tout comprendre cet infiny', Dyrcona replies:

Hé, dites-moy ... comprenés-vous mieux le rien qui est au-delà? Point du tout. Quand vous songés à ce néant, vous vous l'imaginés tout au moins comme du vent, comme de l'air, et cela est quelque chose; mais l'infiny, si vous ne le comprenés en général, vous le concevés au moins par parties, car il n'est pas difficile de se figurer de la terre, du feu, de l'eau, de l'air, des astres, des cieux. Or l'infiny n'est rien qu'une tissure sans bornes de tout cela.<sup>11</sup>

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9. A.M., p. 14.

10. Agr., V, vi, ll. 1557-68; cf. his descriptions of death as pre-birth: Agr., II, iv, l. 601, and A.M., pp. 161-2. See also J.S. Spink, 'Rochester, Dehénault, Voltaire and a chorus from Seneca's "Troades": Negation as a source of lyricism' in Problèmes des genres littéraires, vol. viii, Lodz, 1966, pp. 5-16.

11. A.M., p. 15.

Just as God's infinity is a reality, so the infinite dimensions of His creation, infinite because a reflection of His divine power and goodness which is boundless, 'exist'; this is why 'nothingness' can only be conceived of as a kind of material reality: conceived of within the framework of the principle of plenitude, rather than in that of a philosopher such as Descartes - who conceives of space and matter as 'extent' susceptible of quantitative definition, Cyrano's infinity has a qualitative value. Infinity envisaged as a mathematical abstraction is a concept which is irrelevant in Cyrano's fictional world: his infinity would seem to be nothing other than an indefinite extension of the finite. That the concept is of primordial importance to Cyrano notwithstanding, is borne out, I think, by an anomaly perceptible in an episode which mirrors this one, that is, in the episode of the cirons.

The notion of the infinitely great is quite consciously paralleled by that of the infinitely small in the moon philosopher's initial proposition that 'there exist an infinite number of worlds in an infinite world'.<sup>12</sup> Just as each planetary world is seen by the inhabitants of it as at the centre of the cosmos, and just as each group of planets is centred upon its own sun, so, in the human body, each 'mite' has at once an autonomous existence and is beholden to its 'master', the will-power of its host; each human 'cosmos' has as its living-centre its soul, or 'l'action de ces petites bestes'. In both the macro, and micro, cosm, any judgement as to the exact location of the centre is dependent upon the location of the being

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12. A.M., p. 71.

formulating the judgement; there exists no actual centre in either. Though will-power is considered as the 'coachman' or director, the centre of being for the individual mite seems to be its own desiring; again, the soul - 'l'action de ces petites bestes' - resides in no one part of the microcosmic universe. The location of the centre of activity is purely relative to the locator, and to his subjective opinion.

At this point the parallel breaks down, since, if we accept along with this episode the one immediately following it, in which the same moon philosopher recounts his atomic theory of the formation of living organisms, then we question whether there can be an infinite number of mites within mites. For the atom is an indestructible fixed entity; it is the smallest particle of matter that one can posit and, as such, it must be finite. That such an anomaly is not merely a nicety which presents itself to a twentieth-century mind, while being outside the purview of a seventeenth-century one, is illustrated by the exchange of letters of Pascal and the Chevalier de Méré on the subject of the possibility of dividing up a line an infinite number of times. A concept easy for the mathematician to postulate, Méré, influenced precisely by Epicurean atomism, argues that everything in the universe is comprized of separate, finite particles (for him, unlike Cyrano, the universe too is finite); it is so for the points in a line just as much as for the atoms that form an object, or that object itself:

Que pretendez-vous conclure de cette Ligne que vous coupez en deux également, de cette Ligne Chimerique, dont vous coupez encore une des moities et toujours de mesme jusqu'à l'éternité; Mais qui vous a dit que vous pouvez ainsi diviser cette Ligne si ce qui la compose est inegal, comme un nombre impair? ... Nous ne comprenons les points et les momens que de cela seul qu'ils ne sont pas divisibles.

Méré questions the seriousness of Pascal in positing the infinitesimal:

Je vous demande ... si vous comprenez distinctement qu'en la cent-millieme partie d'un grain de pavot, il y pût avoir un Monde ... Pouvez-vous comprendre dans un si petit espace la difference de grandeurs, celle des mouvemens et des distances? de combien le Soleil est plus grand que ce petit animal qui luit... dans la nuit, et de combien la vive clarté de ce grand Astre surmonte cette faible lueur? Pouvez-vous concevoir en ce petit espace de combien le Soleil va plus vite que Saturne? ... Vous pouvez-vous figurer dans ce petit monde de vostre façon la surface de la terre et de la mer, tant de fontaines, de ruisseaux et de fleuves, tant de Campagnes cultivées, tant de moissons qui se recueillent, tant de forests dont les uns son debout, et les autres coupés, tant de villes, tant d'Ouvriers, dont les uns batissent, les autres démolissent, et quelques-uns font des lunettes d'aproche qui ne laissent pas de servir parmi ces petits hommes, parce que leurs yeux, et tous leurs sens sont proportionnez à ce petit Monde?<sup>13</sup>

While Pascal's observation that Méré 'est très bon esprit, mais il n'est pas géomètre' rings true,<sup>14</sup> by the same token, Méré's insistence upon the tangible and visual aspect of all that is in the universe, be it a living being or a line, puts one in mind of Cyrano's treatment of his variously chosen subjects. Cyrano would seem to stand at a point somewhere in between Méré and Pascal on this particular topic in that he tends

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13. Antoine Gombaud, Chevalier de Méré, OEuvres, Amsterdam, 1692, vol. II, L. 19; the letter is quoted in full in Bl. Pascal, OEuvres, ed. L. Brunschvicg, Paris, 1908-14, vol. IX, pp. 211-27 (passages cited, pp. 216 and 219-20). For a more detailed account of the discussion, see my unpublished M.A. thesis (Manchester University, April 1958) entitled A Seventeenth-century 'Honnête homme': The Chevalier de Méré; an Exposition and Assessment of his Ideas, pp. 212-21.

14. OEuvres, ed. cit., vol. III, p. 388 (Letter to Fermat, dated 29 July, 1654).



to envisage his infinity as a material something; Méré dismisses the very concept of infinity just because he envisages everything in material terms, Pascal, even in the pensée on the 'Disproportion de l'homme' (number 72 in the Brunschvicg edition), tends to abstract it from the context of everyday experience. That the anomaly we have sought to explore is not just a carelessness on Cyrano's part, is further substantiated by a comparison between his position and a passage from Gassendi's Syntagma.

Gassendi, in this not unlike Méré, finds it hard to imagine the infinitesimal, but, at the same time, he finds it equally difficult to deny the possibility of division:

N'est-ce pas une évidente contradiction qu'un tout soit fini et borné de tous côtés, et que cependant il contient des parties infinies? Comme si le tout était autre chose que l'agrégat même des parties ou comme si les parties toutes ensemble pouvaient être plus grandes que le tout! Qui comprendra que l'extrémité du pied de ce petit insecte qu'on nomme ciron, soit tellement féconde en parties qu'elle puisse être divisée en mille millions de parties, dont chacune soit ensuite pareillement divisible, et ainsi à l'infini? De même, qui comprendra que le monde entier ne soit pas divisible en plus de parties qu'un ciron? Car dans l'hypothèse de la divisibilité à l'infini, après avoir divisé le monde en parties, aussi petites que l'on voudra, l'on pourra en prendre autant dans le pied d'un ciron, puis-que comme pour les parties du monde, elles ne sauraient être épuisées par aucune division.<sup>15</sup>

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15. Syntagma Philosophicum, Part II, section 1, Bk. III, ch. v (1658 Lyon ed., I, 262a), cited and translated by G. Sortais in La Philosophie moderne depuis Bacon jusqu'à Leibniz, Paris, 1920, vol. II, p. 104.

Clearly, Cyrano takes a much more definite line on these questions than Gassendi would seem to do; at the same time, his theories are at variance both with those of a mathematician and with those of a 'literal' atomist.

If I have made rather lengthy comparisons with other thinkers of Cyrano's day, I have done so in order to highlight the fact that, in his treatment of the notion of the infinitely small, just as in that of the infinitely great, there is a more marked similarity with the thought of Bruno, than with that of his immediate contemporaries - even Gassendi, and this despite the irreconcilable gap between Cyrano's materialistic monism and Bruno's monistic spiritualism. In his De Minima Bruno had distinguished between what he called 'minima realita' and the picture of a universe which is not only infinitely large, but in which apparently homogeneous entities consist in infinitely reducible corpuscles.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, whether or not Cyrano was, in fact, indebted to Bruno, or to one of his anonymous disciples, and whether or not one considers the cironalite episode to contain an inconsistency, there is little doubt that Cyrano conceives of matter as atomic throughout his Autre Monde. What the introductory proposition in this episode does reveal is his preoccupation with the idea of worlds in worlds; what the apparent anomaly between this and his atomism reveals, is yet another instance of the coinciding of contraries. For the role of infinity is precisely that of bringing together into one whole all the disparate phenomena observable in Nature.

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16. See J.-R. Charbonnel, La Pensée italienne au seizième siècle et le courant libertin, Paris, 1917, pp. 544-5.

What is surprising in the Circularité universelle passage, perhaps, is not that an anomaly should exist, but that, since it does, Cyrano should not exploit it to the full.

Thus it is that the worlds visited by Dyrcona, and the various theories that he hears expounded by moon- and sun-inhabitants, all reveal a universe in which contraries coincide, or, at the very least, are continuous, in everyday reality. It is so too for the very elements that make up the substances that form our everyday world, as the two theories of change expounded by Gonzales illustrate, and it is so because Nature, made up of one primary matter, yet contains a multitude of varieties in her parts. The dimensions of time and space allow of an even greater number of variations than those afforded by the possible combinations of an infinite number of atoms various, though not infinitely various, in shape. Since Nature is, however multitudinous the variations and however contradictory or conflicting these may appear, they must coincide and be identified in the One. The individual creature is not divorced from this experience either: The fact that all is in all causes all creatures to be in sympathy with each other, while the individual soul, notwithstanding the autonomy it enjoys as the expressive agent of the organism, is an integral part of the fiery world-soul. Life itself exists through the simultaneous expression in all creatures of heat and cold.

As we have seen, these concepts do serve as a back-cloth to, and even as grounds for, anti-anthropocentrism, but I think it can now be seen also that they are posited in the first instance as a valid explanation of the nature of the

universe. Certainly, Cyrano is at pains to assure that they 'save appearances'. That apparently disparate hypotheses cohere, is exemplified by the common denominator of the passages that we have just been considering, namely the acceptance of the notion of the coincidence of contraries. Towards the end of the Lune, the daemon of Socrates refers explicitly to the theory of the identity of opposites, thus showing that Cyrano's adherence to the concept is conscious and positive:

Je vous donne celui-ci [ce livre] ... c'est le 'Grand Oeuvre des Philosophes', qu'un des plus forts esprits du Soleil a composé; il prouve là-dedans que toutes choses sont vraies, et déclare la façon d'unir phisiquement les véritez de chaque contradictoire, comme par exemple que le blanc est noir et que le noir est blanc, qu'on peut estre et n'estre pas en mesme temps, qu'il peut y avoir une montagne sans vallée, que le néant est quelque chose et que toutes les choses qui sont ne sont point: mais remarqués qu'il prouve ces inotys paradoxes sans aucune raison captieuse, ny sophistique. 17

The daemon is at pains to emphasize the lack of disputational juggling; albeit the proof of a sun-inhabitant, and thus, of a person of superior cognition living in the region of Truth itself, the theory is presented as an account of what is, and not as a mystical vision of reality. One half of the doctrine is espoused at the expense of the other: whereas for a Cusanus or a Bruno the principle of the identity of opposites is a way of describing the divine and the mystical union of the multiple, for Cyrano it constitutes a description of the actual. The positing of a physically infinite universe, in Cyrano's case (as also, in Bruno's account of the spatial infinite - his

spiritual reality mediatizing the physical), leads him necessarily to the acceptance of an universe in which, if viewed as a whole, contraries must coincide. Why and how this is so, will, I think, become a little clearer if we push further the comparison between his and Bruno's thought.

In the Infinito Bruno describes thus the relativity of spatial reality:

Just as we regard ourselves as at the centre of that [universally] equidistant circle, which is the great horizon and limit of our own encircling ethereal region; so doubtless the inhabitants of the moon believe themselves to be at the centre [of a great horizon] that encircleth this earth, the sun and the other stars, and that is the boundary of the radii of their own horizon. Thus the Earth no more than any other world is at the centre; moreover no points constitute determined celestial poles for our earth, just as she herself is not a definite and determined pole to any other point of the ether, and of the world space; and the same is true of all other bodies. From various points of view these may all be regarded either as centres, or as points on the circumference, as poles, or zeniths and so forth. Thus the earth is not at the centre of the universe; it is central only to our surrounding space.<sup>18</sup>

Cyrano's Autre Monde, and the very design of the Lune, exemplifies just such a world-vision and his satire stems from that vision just as Bruno's ethics had done: the mystic circle of a Cusanus becomes a physical reality which shapes our notion of Truth and not vice versa.

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18. De l'Infinito, II (Gentile ed., I, 316), cited and translated by D. Waley Singer in 'The Cosmology of Giordano Bruno', Isis, vol. xxxiii, part 2, no. 88, June 1941, p. 193.

For Cyrano, as for Bruno, then, the very relativity of all truths is integrally linked to a belief in the unity of truth, itself determined by the unity of infinite space. The role afforded the concept in the thought of each man, however, is quite distinct. Bruno's love of unity, and his interpretation of it, bears still a close affinity to the thought of his neoplatonic predecessors, bringing out fully the implications of the philosophy of a Cusanus and a Plotinus; for Unity constitutes, essentially, for him, a spiritual value, which supercedes all other values, while containing all within it. Cyrano's fascination with unity, by contrast, is conditioned by his wholly materialist and 'thoroughgoing' monism. His rejection of the spiritual distances him infinitely from these philosophical forebears, while allowing him to embrace more fully than any of them the implications that are there to be drawn from their philosophical systems. This he does by developing one side of their philosophy at the expense of the other: in the case of Bruno, it is the Nolan's concept of the physical universe - Nature - that Cyrano develops, at the expense of his concept of a spiritualized matter.

As Professor Lovejoy has demonstrated in his study of The Great Chain of Being, the two main aspects of Platonism - the principle of plenitude on the one hand, and Idealism on the other - have always been essentially irreconcilable; once assimilated to Christian ideology, the projection to its logical conclusion of the first at the expense of the second involved the threat of heresy, yet, at no time was the first sacrificed entirely to the second. Bruno's fate, as did that of Peter Abelard, stemmed from their simultaneously pushing both aspects

of Neoplatonism, albeit within a Christian context, to these logical conclusions. The uniqueness of the Nolan's linking, and indeed the very necessity to have to accept his ideas on a mystical level - they seem to make little sense as a system on any other - results from this marrying of diametrically opposed concepts of reality. God embraces both realities. Not only did such a vision of God - as at once a transcendental and an immanentist power - lead to the Nolan's burning, but, in itself, it poses philosophical problems which could never be solved within the now normally accepted bounds of philosophical enquiry. Thus, ironically, Bruno's heresy consisted in a vision of Reality which was, in the last analysis, wholly mystic. Cyrano, while in rejecting the spiritual dimension, he eschews the better known aspect of Platonism, by so doing, leaves himself free to endorse fully the spirit of the plenitude principle, and that, likewise, within the context of a belief in the Unity of Truth, and the attendant conviction that contraries coincide.

For Bruno, Unity takes precedence over diversity, both incorporating the multiple within it, and 'explaining' it; for it is the One, or divine principle, which informs all, informing being understood not in the Aristotelian sense, but in the opposite one, of an unperishable spiritual principle immanent in all matter, the world-soul. God, or the One, is at once a transcendental Unity or Reality, and immanent, as an entity, in all the parts of His creation. And so, in his concept of Truth, Bruno operates on two levels.

On the one hand, as had been originally described in Plato's cave image, Truth operates on the level of universals

and the absolute only, the infinite and perfect divinity, pure Act, embracing all in its oneness; here, the universe, or the multiple, is but a shadow of the One, and an imperfect one, in which reality represents only partial and relative truths. Yet, on the other hand, God being immanent in, and enlivening, all matter, the multiple, serving as it does to 'explain' the One, which in turn 'complicates' it (to use Brunonian terminology), is, in itself, a valid representation of the Truth. In the Causa, for instance, Bruno writes:

The universe, which is the great simulacrum, the great image and the only begotten nature, is, also, all that it can be, through its species and its principle members and the content of the whole of matter, to which nothing is added and which is lacking in nothing; it is of a whole and single form. However, it is not all that it can be through its differences, modes, properties and its individuals. And so, it is nothing other than a shadow of the first act and first potentiality.<sup>19</sup>

The very use of the term 'simulacrum' reveals the ambivalence of this conception of the universe, suggesting, by definition, an exact copy of an original, whereas 'shadow' in the Platonic sense suggests an imperfect one.

This is not to say that the shadow is not true to itself: As Bruno states in the Infinito,

[Truth resides] in the sensible object as in a mirror, in reason by means of argument and discussion, in the intellect by that of the beginning or the conclusion, in the mind in its own and vital form.<sup>20</sup>

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19. See Opere di Giordano Bruno, ed. A. Guzzo, Milan/Naples, n.d., p. 371 (my translation).

20. Ibid., p. 420 (my translation).



In an universe in which, by the very nature of its infinity, all is relative, each facet of reality is true in itself. This is not to say that Bruno does not deliberately emphasize the paradoxes afforded by such relativity. Certainly, in his philosophy as a whole, the contradiction inherited from Neoplatonism, and, in particular, from Plotinus, is resolved by his monism. Ultimately, there is one substance, just as there is one Truth; the material is as much an intellectual idea as is spirit; both express one and the same infinite unity. Ultimately, the universe, like the truth which it expresses, is reduced to one 'dimension': maximalized, this is the One - or God; minimalized, it is the 'monad'. The multiple is mediatized in the One; matter is spiritualized. The fourth and fifth dialogues of the Causa (the last two), are devoted to Bruno's description of this mediatization; the final dialogue describes Reality as the divinity, fully embracing the concept of the coincidence of contraries in a manner reminiscent of Cusanus.

Like his predecessors and many of his contemporaries, Bruno has as his aim the solving of the problem of how to attain to the One by means of the multiple. His immanentism affords men hope of so doing, for in his view, the One exists in the form of the world-soul, in its entirety, in every part of the whole. In addition, as Frances Yates's study of Bruno's treatises on Mnemonics demonstrates, the Nolan fully endorsed the microcosmic vision of Man, and this in all its astrological and hermetic ramifications. By a right use of the mind and a 'correct' combination of all the necessary data, exceptional men, 'magi'

such as Moses, Jesus-Christ, and Bruno himself, could attain to full knowledge and to Reality.<sup>21</sup> Truth is regarded as accessible to the few, whilst being, at one and the same time, of a wondrous and otherworldly quality. Clearly, Bruno's monism only makes sense within the context of an 'identity of opposites' theory; clearly also, the infinity of God paralleled with the infinity of the cosmos is a condition of it. Above all, however, it makes little sense, as it stands, outside of a notion of philosophy which embraces the non-rational as well as the rational, which gives a large place to the mystic and to the occult 'sciences'. Conventional philosophy and orthodox Christianity, even at this time, gave no place to the Nolan's world, for, both maintained a clear distinction between the material and the spiritual, the realms of rational deliberation and of faith (hence, the large number of fideists), the world of potentiality and imperfection in which we live, and of pure Act, peculiar to God. Surely, to mediatize the material in the spiritual is to deprive it of its meaning and to make a nonsense of the world as we know it through our senses. Only the mind of a mystic, a magician or an alchemist could pretend otherwise. Bruno's contemporaries and his successors were quick to perceive the dangers and illogicalities of his philosophy. God, being in every part of Nature, is in danger of being identified with every part (the same argument was levelled at his successor, Spinoza); pure Act, is He not at once, nevertheless, potentiality and imperfection, that is,

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21. See F. A. Yates, *The Art of Memory*, Harmondsworth, 1969 (Penguin ed.), chs. 9, 10, and 11.

by definition, at once Himself and less than Himself? In an universe which is infinite, there is no longer a place for God outside of the cosmos; yet, the place that Bruno allots to Him smacks of heresy, since He is not merely a God of the mind. Ironically, despite Bruno's preoccupation with spirituality, his immanentism means that his God is in danger of becoming 'naturalized', and his spiritualized matter of becoming materialized spirit. It is understandable that Bruno should have relinquished his interest in Democritus on the grounds that the Pre-Socratic left no place for the spiritual - whether or not Bruno's interpretation was accurate - <sup>22</sup> but, it is largely, perhaps, precisely because he did not adopt such a fully corpuscular account of the universe and phenomena that he runs into difficulty both with the Inquisition and on his own philosophical terms.<sup>23</sup>

Cyrano's imaginative writings bear out such a contention: working on a philosophical basis highly reminiscent of

22. Bruno, Opere, ed. cit., p. 355; cf. above, ch. VI, p. 344, n. 23.

23. As the studies of Frances Yates show, Bruno's own propensities were those of a 'magus' rather than of a natural philosopher (See, in particular, her Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, London, 1964, and The Art of Memory, ed. cit. Cf. also, D. P. Walker's review of the first work in Modern Language Review, vol. 61, 1966, pp. 719-21, which endorses this interpretation.) In her study of La Conception de la nature chez Giordano Bruno (Paris, 1967, p. 168), Hélène Védérine maintains that 'sans elle [la théorie de la coincidence des contraires] toute la philosophie de Bruno deviendrait incompréhensible'.

Brunonian cosmology and epistemology, the end-product of his thinking is quite alien to the Nolan's. Above all, it is precisely because his physical account of the universe is dependent upon basically Democritean atomism, and can thus render an efficient and final cause redundant, that Cyrano's materialistic monism is less nonsensical than the Brunonian Idealistic one. With his eternal, infinite cosmos, the Promethean role afforded fire, and the naturally dynamic atom, Cyrano can describe an immanentist system which contains far less anomalies than Bruno's. The principle of the identity of opposites is, for Cyrano, a way of envisaging the world rather than an ingredient of a philosophical system which would make no sense without it.

Cyrano is able to embrace fully the principle of plenitude and avoid all its anomalies, just because he dispenses with its original raison d'être: God. The whole complexion of the theory changes. The 'oneness' of Cyrano's Nature, as of his fiery principle or world-soul, has a completely different import from the singleness and unity of Bruno's divine principle, whether or not Cyrano uses theistic terminology to describe his Nature and centre of life. The functions of God are assumed by Nature and its centre - the Sun (in our world-system), but not His Christian role of affording personal providence. (Movement is instigated by Heat, the universe is non-created, being infinite in Time as well as space, 'Providence' gives place to Chance.)

The unity of the universe is taken for granted by

Cyrano, and it is its diversity which fascinates him. Nature being but the sum of her parts, being formed of one primary matter, and being moved (enlivened) by one principle, cannot be other than one, so that the idea of attaining to the One, that is, the problem of passing from the multiple to the One, loses all significance by the same token. The all in all account of matter ensures that the One is of the same nature as the parts which comprize it. Still more, through time, each part, or atom, will partake of innumerable composite forms and will experience countless modes of living in all manner of organism, so that, in this way, it experiences fullness of being, which is tantamount to perfection, or oneness. In other words, there is no question of having to attain to the One through the multiple, since the One - Unity, or Nature - is the sum total of that multiple, although its oneness precedes any operation of addition; it was there from the first and does not have to await the fullness of time, for it is present in all atoms.

Nature, incorporating infinite time as well as space, is itself an ever-emergent force, the bounds of which are impossible to conceive. Each part of it is characterized by its ever-changing nature, only the smallest parts, the atoms, remaining in themselves constant. Even this distinction loses much point, however, given that, in any combination of atoms, the behaviour of each is conditioned to some extent by the behaviour of its neighbours; as is the case, for instance, for the human body, according to the circularité theory. Considered in the larger context of continents and planets, and not just that of living organisms upon planets, we discover that this

vision of the world holds good, and, I would suggest, projects the notion of the plurality of worlds further than does the Nolan. Dyrcona, presented with the problem of how the New World had remained undiscovered over centuries, proffers a simple answer: it had not yet come into existence; for it, like many other worlds in the cosmos had come into being over time. In the same way, worlds are disintegrating all the while.

On the one hand, the sun throws off the remains of the matter which, by virtue of its fiery nature, it consumes; on the other, having burned up that matter, it also loses part of its own fiery matter, out of which new suns are formed, each of which provides the centre of new worlds comprized of the burnt out matter shed from the sun. Cyrano is at pains to explain as well as posit the existence of the infinite cosmos, with its infinite number of solar systems, and he uses the discovery of America as a supportive example of his theory. The detail with which he entertains his theory witnesses to the conviction with which he holds the general principle.<sup>24</sup> The notion of the ever-changing, ever-emergent (if cyclical) nature of the universe runs right through the Autre Monde, to be entertained at every level, and to incorporate every size and shape of organic matter, be it planet or mite.

A corollary of the plurality of worlds theory is the dispensation with heaven and hell. As Bayle points out when discussing the Causa, in his Dictionnaire historique et critique (under Brunus, Jordanus), Bruno's system does away with the fear

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24. A.M., pp. 15-16.

of Hell. As for Cyrano, while he makes a playful reference to it, situating it at the centre of the earth, to account for the earth's movement,<sup>25</sup> otherwise, in his various descriptions of the world, he dispenses with it altogether. Both on theological and on purely physical grounds, it makes no sense. He has specific precedents for such an omission in Lucretius's lack of fear of the gods, in the famous lines of the chorus in the Troades already variously referred to in this and the previous chapter, in the Paduan Naturalists' inheritance of the Averroan theory of the universal intellect, and in the chronologically more immediate Quatrains du Deïste.<sup>26</sup>

The materialization of the cosmos rules out Intelligencies or Angels, and, along with its spatial infinitization, the astrological arts dear to Cyrano's predecessors. It is in this last particular that he radically parts company with Bruno. As Frances Yates points out:

Much of the legend of Bruno, the martyr for modern science and the Copernican theory, Bruno bursting out of medieval Aristotelian trammels into the nineteenth century, rests on the rhetorical passages in the Cena on the Copernican Sun on the Hermetic ascent through the spheres.<sup>27</sup>

25. A.M., p. 13.

26. See above, ch. VI, p. 328, n. 7; J.-R. Charbonnel, op. cit., pp. 165-8; F. Lachèvre, Voltaire mourant, Paris, 1908, pp. 99-136, which contains the Quatrains du Déïste under the title L'Anti-Bigot. In denying to his system a place for the divinity, Cyrano is at variance with the anonymous 'Deïst', but he does not go so far as to suggest that hell is an invention of those who wish to use it as a deterrent to maintain law and order - a main argument in the Quatrains.

27. The Art of Memory, ed. cit., p. 301.

As I have already mentioned in chapter II above (pp. 151-2), it is in this dispensation with astrology, as with his rejection of a theistic context, that Cyrano differs from Copernicus, Bruno, and Campanella. Indeed, despite their wish to account for all phenomena rationally and by natural explanations, all those Italian Naturalists upon whose work Cyrano may well have drawn, just as the two interested in astronomy to whom I have just referred, along with Copernicus, considered astrology to be an integral part of their natural science: this is as true of Pomponazzi, Cardano and Vanini as of Bruno and Campanella. While Cyrano draws upon the occultist as a means to describe the superiority of the daemon, yet does not accept the occult into his scheme of things, he neither alludes to, nor entertains, any purely astrological concepts.

Cyrano's standpoint is, therefore, very close to that of a Bruno save in the crucial respect that he rejects the very principle which, for his predecessor, is the one of paramount importance, namely, the spiritual. In substituting a wholly materialist universe for even a partly spiritual one, Cyrano ignores all Idealistic systems of knowledge, and denies the possibility of any transcendental power. There is, then, no room for universals or for absolutes as generally understood, and the truth of any reality, however partial, must surely reside in that reality, in the sense conveyed by Bruno when he stated that 'truth resides in the sensible object as in a mirror'.

This notwithstanding, Cyrano would seem, like his more immediate contemporaries, as, for instance, Descartes and



Gassendi, with whom traditionally, the author of the Autre Monde has been compared, to make a distinction between partial truths and universal Truth. In order to elucidate more specifically Cyrano's attitudes to truth, if not his theory of knowledge, I shall briefly consider our findings so far in the light of the epistemology of Gassendi, and, to a lesser extent, of Descartes; finally, I shall compare Cyrano's description of Truth as a universally applicable constant (in the Soleil) with Campanella's notion of Reality.

It has long been a stock ingredient of Cyranian scholarship to compare the ideas of the Autre Monde with those of Gassendi, and, in particular, with the final stage of Gassendi's development, as encapsulated in his posthumously published Syntagma philosophicum. Apart from obvious similarities in content or of subject matter, the assumption of influence - of Gassendi on Cyrano (the reverse has never been postulated) - has always found its corroboration in a legend imputable to Jean Grimarest, according to whom Cyrano forced his way into the classes which Lullier had arranged for his illegitimate son, Chapelle, to be given by the father's friend, Gassendi.<sup>28</sup>

A variant of this critical tradition, and a part of it exemplified in Aram Vartanian's study of Diderot and Descartes (Princeton, New Jersey, 1953), is to compare the Lune to Gassendi's philosophy, and the Soleil to Descartes's, imputing a direct influence upon Cyrano's thinking. Vartanian

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28. See his Vie de Mr. Molière (first published in 1705), ed. G. Mongrédien, Paris, 1955, pp. 38-9.

writes:

The early absorption of Gassendi's teaching into the purview of Cartesian natural philosophy is concretely perceived in a figure such as Cyrano de Bergerac. The Etats et Empires de la Lune, completed towards 1648, had reflected distinctly Cyrano's course of instruction under Gassendi in 1641. Afterwards, however, the celebrated libertine came under the progressive sway of Descartes's physics, largely through his friendship with Rohault whom he met around 1648. In consequence, Cyrano's Histoire des Etats et Empires du Soleil, composed between 1650 and 1655, contrasted sharply with the previous work by finding its inspiration wholly in Descartes. Written about the same time, Cyrano's Fragment de Physique was so faithful an outline of Cartesian theory that Rohault incorporated much of it into his own Traité de Physique of 1671.<sup>29</sup>

As I have tried to show throughout this study, it is highly questionable whether Cyrano's thought developed so radically as this survey pretends; rather, have we found that the thought of Lune and Soleil parallel each other closely, the second novel elaborating on the concepts which form the philosophical backbone of the first. Incidentally, Dr. Harth, like Vartanian, assumes the authorship of the Fragment de Physique to be that of Cyrano, and also like him, treats of this work together with the Autre Monde, and, in particular, with the Soleil, and this, specifically, when elucidating Cyrano's epistemology. I think, indeed, that it is largely on account of this that she is adamant in adjudging that theory of knowledge to be modern though sceptic.<sup>30</sup> Vartanian's

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29. Op. cit., pp. 55-6.

30. Op. cit., pp. 99-108; pp. 124-34.

suggestion that Rohault copied Cyrano is not the usual explanation of the Fragment: the suggestion that Cyrano took his lead from Rohault almost slavishly (perhaps, merely setting down lecture notes which, after his death, his publisher incorporated into the 1662 Nouvelles Oeuvres), Rohault publishing his own account of his philosophy later than Cyrano's posthumous editor, would seem a much more plausible hypothesis.<sup>31</sup>

It is for all these reasons that, in this study, I have deliberately left the Fragment de Physique out of account. However, if we follow on the tradition of comparison of Cyrano's work with that of Gassendi and Descartes, and do so with a central issue for both the better known thinkers in mind, namely, their theories of knowledge, we shall hope thereby, the better to characterize the thought of Cyrano.

Without doubt, close similarities exist between the philosophy of Gassendi and the content of Cyrano's imaginative works. Both account for the physical universe with an atomic theory of matter and movement, albeit with different emphasis on the various sources for their ideas, which were to be found in the writings of Antiquity. Thus, for example, historians of Gassendist thought have seen his corpuscular theory now as dynamic, now as mechanistic, without any clear-cut conclusion

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31. This explanation is favoured by Lachèvre, introduction, A.M., p. XCIX, n. 2; by J. S. Spink, French Free-Thought from Gassendi to Voltaire, London, 1960, p. 62; and by M. Alcover, op. cit., p. 19.

having been reached;<sup>32</sup> whereas, in this study, and, in particular, in chapter II above, I have sought to demonstrate that Cyrano's notion of atomic movement, whether of fire or of the rest of matter, is dynamic, and, in this, Democritean rather than Epicurean. Be that as it may, certainly, Gassendi had entertained the idea that all matter is sentient, just as he had accepted the possibility that beasts may think, albeit in a rudimentary and unsophisticated fashion. He was willing also at least to posit a world-soul. One other striking similarity between his and Cyrano's thought is the insistence upon the role of fire as a fashioning substance, or world-soul.<sup>33</sup>

For Gassendi, however, there exist two distinct parts to the human soul, the one of material composition, the other, rational and spiritual, of divine origin. It is God who unites the two parts. Insofar that, in Gassendi's system, the universe, and man himself, work independently of God's

32. For P.-F. Thomas, for instance, Gassendi's atomism is dynamic, since, he argues, each atom is divinely endowed with a natural, immanent, movement; this 'force', 'sensation', or 'perception' is a quality inseparable from it (See his La Philosophie de Gassendi, Paris, 1889, ch. III). By contrast, B. Rochot emphasizes God's role in Gassendi's system, as a guarantor of natural laws; this external regulation of natural phenomena implies a mechanistic notion of movement. (See his study of Les Travaux de Gassendi sur Epicure et sur l'atomisme, 1619-58, Paris, 1944). G. Sortais op. cit., vol. II, p. 264, concludes that Gassendi's system is both dynamic and mechanistic.

33. These aspects of Gassendi's philosophy are discussed by G. Sortais, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 118-22 and pp. 127-9.

initial creation of them, and are reliant wholly upon atomic movement, that is, material causes and effects, he and Cyrano are at one. In this sense, the fact that Gassendi is a theistic, Christian thinker and Cyrano a non-theistic one are not a stumbling block. This is so because, though a Churchman, Gassendi does not use this position in his search after knowledge of the physical universe, nor in his questionings as to the nature of things. Like Descartes, Gassendi, also, is a Christian who puts his faith and his philosophical deliberations into quite distinct categories: in their philosophy neither wished to concern himself with theological questions; both were prepared to accept the transcendent reality affirmed by religion, but did not use religion as a basis for their theory of knowledge. It is for this reason that both had no alternative but to face the challenge of the Sceptics, Descartes overcoming their denial of the possibility of certain knowledge by purely human means, namely, by his systematic doubting, Gassendi working his way from the wholly sceptical position reflected in the adage nihil scire, to the belief that, if essences cannot be known, at least partial knowledge of the natural world can be attained to by means of experience, including controlled observation or experiment.<sup>34</sup>

For Descartes, the human mind is in contact with the real when it has the idea of 'extension' as its object, and the

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34. The former attitude is expressed in the second book of the Exercitationes of 1624 (exercise vi), and the latter one in the Syntagma philosophicum, Part I, Bk. II, ch. v. Both passages have been translated into English by Craig B. Bush in The Selected Works of Pierre Gassendi, New York, 1972, pp. 85-108; pp. 326-49.

relationship between things quantitatively considered is a description of the real. For Gassendi, by contrast, that quantitative consideration of an object (that is, through mathematics), is nothing other than just another appearance of it, which is no more reliable as, nor any nearer being a description of its true, or intrinsic, nature than is the sensual 'appearance' of an object as any particular person might apprehend it.<sup>35</sup> To put it another way, for him, a mathematical appraisal of reality has no more veracity than any subjective apprehension of a thing or phenomenon, since, he maintains, 'connaître la structure et l'organisation d'une chose quelconque, c'est seulement l'affaire du créateur'.<sup>36</sup>

Whereas, in the Exercitationes Paradoxicæ adversus Aristoteleos, then, Gassendi starts off from the wholly Pyrrhonian position that nothing is knowable, by the time of writing of the Syntagma he is confident that to know the operations of a thing is to know it in human terms. Though, it is true, each person's apprehension of an object may differ, yet, each is valid as a representation of one and the same thing, and this one thing does possess an intrinsic nature which conditions each person's apprehension of it equally as much, if not more than, the idiosyncrasies of the individual's sensual apparatus. In other words, the common denominator of all the various apprehensions of an object is the object's intrinsic nature.

35. See Exercitationes, Bk. II, ex. viii, referred to by H. Berr, op. cit., p. 56.

36. In his letter on the De Veritate of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, written in 1634; cited by H. Berr, op. cit., p. 67.

Thus, in the Logic of the Syntagma, Gassendi writes:

It can be said that the object has really only one nature and that the various appearances it has exist by the necessity of the nature of the faculties in which they are created ....

Indeed, position, distance, location, mixture, constitution, quantity, rarity, frequency, and whatever else, do not prevent things from actually being certain things in themselves and creating this appearance because of some physical necessity in some people and that one in others .... Causes why things present this appearance or another can be investigated in order that something certain and true may be won and known.<sup>37</sup>

A number of impressions of any one object, however diverse, will tend to cohere in some particulars, and it is this comparative relationship with the object observed which enables us to know, at least partially, its nature.

Gassendi's final position, then, is that of a 'dogmatist' insofar that he does believe in the veracity of the sensible world in itself, and his basically Epicurean atomism and sensationism provides the foundation for this belief. He is a 'sceptic' insofar that he does not believe that man can attain to a knowledge of the Reality behind phenomena by purely natural means. Reason serves to interpret data which necessarily represent a partial, tendencious - human - view of reality, but a knowledge of the relationship between things does afford us a viable working basis by which to live. In the light of these convictions, Gassendi cannot but adopt a fideist approach, though it is true that,

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37. Syntagma philosophicum, Part I, Bk. II, ch. v, translated by C. B. Bush, ed. cit., p. 343.

in the latter part of his life, he was prepared to make his theism a part of his philosophy.

The very 'modernity' of Gassendi's attitude depends upon this divorce between the two worlds of partial and absolute truth: it is just because of his belief in the distinction between the two that he attached so much importance to experiment and controlled observation tempered by Reason, and to relationships rather than merely to data as such. He, like all the new scientists and unlike sixteenth-century thinkers, takes for granted the unity of Truth and, along with it, the existence of universal natural laws. He no longer puts all his attention on the problem of how to pass from the multiple to the One, accepting that such a task is impossible by rational, that is, purely human, means; instead, he is content to concentrate on amassing data, that is, in attaining to a sure knowledge of partial truths, of aspects of the multiple, as a way of endowing some coherence on the world.

Cyrano's representation of the world and his opinion as to the human being's ability to know it, has little or nothing in common with Descartes's: nowhere does he talk of the universe in terms of abstract relationships, nor does he suggest that a method, let alone the right method of conducting our reason is the secret to success in distinguishing between truth and falsehood. As we have seen in chapter IV above, if the intellectual cabbage has any advantage over man, it lies precisely in the possibility that the vegetable knows immediately and instinctively, whereas human beings have to resort to the discursive faculty of reason. Far from perceiving in mathematics certainty and evidence, Cyrano prizes



the immediate, the spontaneous, and the simple, seeing in these attributes the very voice of Nature. The remark made at the end of the 1657 version of the Lune, that the mathematician is 'un homme qui promet beaucoup et qui ne tient rien' is wholly in keeping with the attitudes expressed throughout the Autre Monde.<sup>38</sup>

It is not only with Descartes that Cyrano is at variance, however: despite undoubted and obvious similarities between Gassendi's theory of knowledge and much in Cyrano's approach to this subject, the two men are just as obviously operating with completely different ends in view, and by completely different means. Philosophically speaking, their vision of the world is quite distinct, since the one retains a traditional dualism, the other eschews it. Above all, in situating Gassendi's epistemology, one must surely take into account the fact that he practised what he preached: he was a scientist, not a mere theorist, and in no wise a writer of fiction. Indeed, at that very time when he doubted most, he continued to observe keenly and avidly all the astronomical data at his disposal, and interested himself in every possible technical improvement in his apparatus, as his correspondence with Peiresc demonstrates. He reveals a practitioner's approach to science, and, while yet questioning the validity of his findings on the level of universals, he always keeps a clear distinction between the two philosophical fields.

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38. See above, pp. 223-6, and A.M., p. 97, vt.

Cyrano's position is quite different, and it is this fact which tends to undermine all those studies which put his fictional writings on a par with philosophers like Descartes and Gassendi. He was not a scientist; he did not, as far as we are aware, conduct physical experiments, nor observe natural phenomena in a systematic way. Nowhere does he purport to be of such a class of man. Neither astronomer nor physicist in his own right, neither logician nor epistemologist as such, he draws on the ideas or theories that he, as a layman, culls from the 'experts' of his day, and puts these to a satirical - that is, an entertaining and enlightening - moral use. It is precisely the notion of control, of the application of rules and constants to hypotheses, of the general criterion of quantitative measurement as of the concept of universal and measurable laws, which is lacking in everything that we read in the Autre Monde for us to be able to treat its contents as 'science'.

In her study of La Conception de la nature chez Giordano Bruno H el ene V edrine argues that Cyrano typifies his age in his description of a flying machine that takes his hero to the moon; for, she says, he shows a fascination for the technological practicalities of the plurality of worlds theory completely lacking in the thought of Bruno. For the Nolan, a technological or mathematical approach to his cosmic vision would have been not only irrelevant but a hindrance to an understanding of the universe. Truth lies within Nature; it has to do with the seizing of a single, spiritual, reality,

hidden within the outer physical appearance which describes it. She writes, earlier in her book, 'Bruno se méfie de la mesure qui, à ses yeux, ne saurait jamais saisir le réel dans son essence même.'<sup>39</sup> While, it is true, Cyrano does describe his various machines in some detail, there would seem to be a lack of technological 'know-how' in his accounts; the fact that he makes an attempt to explain away their mechanism does reflect the contemporary interest and progress in technology, but the imprecision suggests that these descriptions are primarily part of the ornamental fabric of his fiction, not serious portrayals of methods of flight. In his philosophical outlook, and, in particular, in his attitudes to reality and access to knowledge, Cyrano seems to be closer to a thinker like Bruno than to a Descartes or a Gassendi. Having rejected the spiritual, he stands at a half-way position between the mystic appraisal of Reality of a Bruno and the experimental and empirical approach of a Gassendi, or the mathematical and speculative method of a Descartes. In this sense, he is like none of these thinkers, or so they would appraise his position. Notwithstanding these provisos, the most marked similarity between Gassendi and Cyrano on the question of our apprehension of reality is that both emphasize the dependence of the human being upon sense-data, and both value this path to knowledge highly. Our knowledge of the world is wholly dependent upon our sense perceptions insofar that reason is merely a tool with which to interpret experience. For both

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39. Op. cit., pp. 178; 248-9.

men there may well be a gap between our apprehension of an object and its actual nature, as the account of man of the daemon of Socrates suggests. However, this is, I think, the closest that Cyrano ever comes to adopting a Pyrrhonian attitude; neither is it primarily a relativistic one.

In themselves our sense perceptions do not lie; they impart reliable information, but, by the very nature and number of our sense-organs, they provide an incomplete set of data of the object observed. When Cyrano describes his essentially Lucretian theory of sense perception, he does not entertain the question of completeness of evidence at all, but rather concentrates upon the fidelity of representation of the object or phenomenon within terms of the organ of sense of the observer; however, the problem would seem to lie implicit in the corpuscular theory of sense perception. For instance, what our eyes perceive is determined by the degree of correlation between the size and shape of the atoms (or 'species' constituting the simulacra) emitted from the object observed and the size and shape of our eye-balls, and the 'pores' in their matter, through which the 'species' enter. Similarly, hearing, taste and smell are dependent upon the compatibility of the corporeal nature of the 'species' and of the ear, tongue, and nose respectively. Again, it is clear that Gassendi's interest in the discrepancy between different people's account of an object stems from this Epicurean theory of sensation; Cyrano never goes into the question. Instead, he concentrates on man's sensual dexterity as a biological species, comparing it unfavourably to the higher species of daemon. The shift in slant may be accounted for to a large extent by the different

purpose of each set of writings; Cyrano's aim is primarily to attack man's overestimation of himself. Also, given that he has rejected the transcendental, the quest for knowledge of the intrinsic nature of any object or phenomenon loses its original perspective.

The daemon argues that man is not so well endowed in number and type of sense-organ as is his own kind; in just the same way, as we discover later, in the Soleil, ordinary men are inferior in corporeal structure to philosophers. Even the intellectual cabbage, though lower on the scale of being, possesses senses unknown to man. There is no difference in kind here between the daemon's case and the young moon philosopher's diatribe against belief in personal immortality: that, deprived of our organs of sense at death, we lose all possible means of knowing ourselves or the world around us. The daemon compares man's inferior range of sense perceptions to the plight of the blind man; the young philosopher repeats this example, adding to it that of the deaf and the maimed, comparing them all to a painter without brushes. And so, the daemon dismisses the spiritual and the whole realm of faith on the same grounds: if men lend credence to the occult, if they accept some natural phenomena on trust, is this not due to their limited number of organs of sensation? Conversely, as we discover in the sun, if the philosopher is superior in understanding, this too, is wholly due to his material structure.<sup>40</sup> There is then, no room for fideism in Cyrano's universe; in any case, since there is no spiritual realm, such an attitude

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40. A.M., pp. 37-8; p. 183; p. 69 (not in E); pp. 93-4; pp. 183 and 191.

is redundant. Does not the daemon's description of his superior nature demonstrate rather that what man does know is valid, and that what he does not know is, nevertheless, of the same basic nature as what he does? For, there is no difference in kind between the two categories, all being material, atomic, and enlivened by the same fiery principle.

A stock argument of the Sceptics from Sextus Empiricus on, and one used by Montaigne in the Apologie de Raimond Sebond as well as, later, by Gassendi, the argument of the daemon and of the young lunar philosopher serves rather as a description of the many facets of a single reality - Nature - and no longer as a proof of the impossibility of perceiving the real. Already Gassendi had lent validity to these incomplete sensual accounts of reality, but it is Cyrano who, with his monistic physics, reduces that reality to a single dimension. Whether or not there is a difference in aspect, or a perceptible discrepancy, between each partial truth, and whether or not each creature's apprehension takes in all facets of an object or its behaviour, partial truths, Truth, actuality, and Reality are one and the same. Thus, by this investigatory path we arrive at the same conclusions as to Cyrano's concept of knowledge as we had done in our examination of his use of the principle of the coincidence of contraries. For, both relative truths and universal Truth are faithful representations of what is. The daemon and the cabbage may be aware of aspects of reality of which we are not, but this notwithstanding, what we do feel or perceive discursively, is. This conclusion follows on Cyrano's atomic theory of change and his doctrine of the fiery world-soul just

as logically as does the relativity of vision attendant upon the positing of an infinite number of worlds in worlds.

There is far less discrepancy than would at first appear, then, between Cyrano's humiliation of man and his championing of reason (that quality peculiar to man), between the insistence upon the partial validity of what we perceive, and the positing of the universality of Truth, or of its unity; a universality or unity of which, by definition, man must partake, and this, whether or not he appreciates that he does.

If Cyrano lays more emphasis upon Man's plight as a species than upon the particular anomalies of perception between one individual and another, this is wholly in keeping with his notion of Man's role in the universe. Always, he insists upon the moral obligation of men to the whole of the natural world in which they live: their relationship both <sup>vis-à-vis</sup> each other and <sup>vis-a-vis</sup> other creatures is always assessed in the light of the whole. That each individual is conditioned by his organic make-up at any point in time, at once undermines the importance of his persona in subjective terms, and validates his picture of the universe, insofar that each personality is a manifestation of Nature, albeit an incomplete one. Thus, when Cyrano would seem to believe that the truth resides in every part of Nature, he is at once akin to Gassendi, in believing in the intrinsic value of every perception, and operating on a completely different philosophical basis, since that value is determined not by any other, transcendental, criterion, but by his materialistic monism. The actual organic structure of any creature cannot

but be 'true': it cannot be other than it is; nor can the observations of that creature, determined as they are, wholly, by that organic structure. We assess 'Truth' on two levels still, but each has to do with the natural world and no other: thus, the philosopher's and the daemon's accounts of reality are 'fuller' than those of ordinary mortals, and, in this sense, more 'perfect', more 'true'; but, at the same time, all these accounts are true, and, regarded as manifestations of Nature, equally valid and equally necessary. The dichotomy built into the principle of plenitude theory continues to obtain, and we can, perhaps, the better understand that Brunonian distinction between 'potentiality' and 'powerlessness' made when he tries to account for evil in an essentially 'good' universe.<sup>41</sup> Campanella, likewise, indulges in what would appear to be an even more blatant example of playing on words and concepts, with the same end in view, when he argues that all beings consist of being and non-being, the falsity or imperfection which we believe we perceive in creatures, being not evil or falsity per se, but an absence of being (non-*être*).<sup>42</sup>

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41. See Bruno, Opere, ed. cit., (Causa, III), p. 371: 'What will you say of death, of corruption, of vices, of defects, and of monsters? ... These things are neither act nor potentiality, but are defect and lack of power' (my translation - the second sentence depends on word-play, viz: 'Queste cose non sono atto e potenza, ma sono difetto e impotenza'; my italics).

42. B. M. Bonansea, in his Tommaso Campanella, Renaissance Pioneer of Modern Thought, Washington, 1969, p. 129, criticizes Campanella for his illogicality in this matter. This seems harsh, given that the concept of privation or non-being as a component of living creatures derives from Neoplatonism, and is evident in the thought of all the sixteenth-century Italian Naturalists in some measure. J.-R. Charbonnel, op. cit., pp. 586-94, discusses the question of being and non-being in the context of determinism and chance.



Cyrano's thought, despite its rejection of the otherworldliness essential to Platonism, yet retains much of this Neoplatonic speciousness in the depiction of the universe, and his fascination with the possibility of the identification of opposites makes very good sense within such a context.

And so, if Cyrano does not entertain all those problems attached to the wish to attain to an objective knowledge of the universe, or even of the immediate world around him, this is because, in his universe, there is no such thing. Appearance is Reality, is Truth. For his monism, excluding as it does any other substance than the material, means that the object is what it appears to be, its organic structure determining its operative field as its appearance. There lies no other, greater, intenser existence of the object beyond the object, nor is there any distinction in nature between partial truths and universals, as for the Platonist, Aristotelian, or theist. For there are no universals, other than the existence of prime matter and the atomic aspect of it; the only constant is change.

Since Nature, comprized of one matter and one fiery world-soul, is Truth, all that is natural is true, and equally valid as an expression of the whole. There can only be moral falsity, or what, three centuries later, Sartre is to term 'bad faith'. Only if the organism goes against his nature, minimizes or distorts it, does he indulge in 'untruth'; if he denies the validity of his sense perceptions, if he refuses to act according to his nature (granted that such a course of action is possible), then he is morally culpable. This is why Cyrano couples reason with experience; for each experience as such must be valid. It is when its complexion is distorted by the application to it of cant, superstition, artificially

imposed theories and philosophies, that it must be regarded as false, untrue, and, therefore, wrong. Cyrano takes for granted that a sensation or experience in itself correlates with Truth. It is only if we view reality in two compartments, subjectively as well as objectively, that any problem arises. (subjectively here being understood as 'with prevention or prejudice'). Apprehension of reality is synonymous with apprehension of Truth, and partial or relative truths coincide with Truth, just because Cyrano chooses not to differentiate between subject and object, but rather to concentrate on his 'all in all' theory, set as it is in the cadre of a monistic physics. The trend we have already discussed towards a praising of the whole at the expense of Man's privileged position is borne out by Cyrano's depiction of Truth in the Soleil. This is probably why his work contains no metaphysics, and indeed, no epistemology in the usual sense of the words. He needs no theory of knowledge; all the weight of his thinking is directed to moral criteria rather than to philosophical ones.

If reason goes hand in hand with experience it is because error, or untruth, consists in flying in the face of experience, itself a misuse of reason. The data of everyday living is the matter of Truth; therefore, all authorities, all schools of thought, indeed all human collectivities are suspect, for, like the Aristotelians, they bend natural things to accommodate principles, instead of founding their principles upon things as they are (that is, things as they appear to be).<sup>43</sup>

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43. A.M., p. 54. Cf. L, p. 67: 'il est aisé de prouver tout ce qu'on veut quand on ajuste les principes aux opinions, et non pas les opinions aux principes'.

It is in this context that the individual comes into his own. To experience in the present is to know; this is the one common factor, the one constant. Experience is always immediate, and, while it can be recalled, its essential validity resides in its very immediacy. The faculty of Reason, by contrast, is a discursive instrument, and this is why both daemon and intellectual cabbage alike emphasize their superiority over Man in apprehending reality.

Reason then, is no less valid, in itself, than sensation, only its operative field is more restricted and its workings slower. We may approach the whole question, already entertained in Chapter IV above, from another angle, and arrive at the conclusion that there is no contradiction in Cyrano's thought here: it makes perfectly good sense that he should praise reason and use it as the chief tool in his satire, while in the very content of that satire stating a preference for the immediate and more direct awareness of what is that sensation affords us. Thus, Cyrano's relativism does not in the least rule out a belief in the unity of Truth and its universality. The one is a facet of the other. Whether, and in how far, that Truth is accessible to Man is a thornier question, as we have already seen, for to argue that it is, in the light of the daemon's account, involves a certain play on words; while, to argue that it is not is to deny that monistic world-vision which characterizes the Autre Monde.

Yet, to approach Cyrano's essentially imaginative vision in this way, is surely inapposite. In the light of

his moral purpose, these apparent inconsistencies take on a completely different complexion: instead of being surprised at apparent illogicalities or contradictions, we should rather appreciate the overall coherence of his account, and the pains with which he presents a moral perspective in consistent philosophical terms: throughout, Cyrano's monism, clearly defined, and maintained within the same main physical terms in both Lune and Soleil, serves as the basis for both his satire and his depiction of the universe in which Man lives. Is there not then, truly, far more similarity than may at first appear, and than most critics have given Cyrano credit for, between, on the one hand, his ridiculing of man's pretensions and his insistence upon the relativity of human experience, and, on the other, his description, in the sun-situated episodes, of a universal Truth, the voice of Nature herself, which is wholly, immediately and spontaneously accessible to man? I shall hope to demonstrate that this is indeed so, and shall make a last comparison, between Cyrano's depiction of the Truth in the solar regions and Campanella's theory of knowledge, with this end in view.

In the course of his journey through the regions of the Sun, Dyrcona meets with an old man who possesses the gift of mind-reading. Amazed at the undoubted skill of the old man, he learns that the secret lies in simulating the corporeal appearance of the observed person, which necessarily results in a like conformity of thought, the activity of mind and body stemming alike from that same matter which makes up

the organism. The same quasi-scientific exactitude is suggested here, as in Cyrano's explanation of atomic creation, and as in the whole theory of the role of heat in the force of the imagination: to support his theory, in this instance, Cyrano has his old man, the character 'Campanella', cite the case of the close resemblance of identical twins, and goes so far as to regard them as truly identical in every particular:

Mais ne voyez-vous pas qu'il estoit impossible que la composition des organes de leurs corps estant pareille dans toutes ses circonstances, ils n'opérassent d'une façon pareille, puis que deux instrumens égaux, touchés également, doivent rendre une harmonie égale? et qu'ainsi conformant tout à fait mon corps au vostre, et devenant, pour ainsi dire, vostre gémeau, il est impossible qu'un mesme branle de matière ne nous cause à tous deux un mesme branle d'esprit. 44

The dependability of such an activity is as great as the single truth of two examples of the same musical note: no element of chance enters into such a phenomenon, but only in the execution of it.

The placing of this theory in the mouth of 'Campanella' is no accident, for already in the Lune, the daemon had referred to the real-life Campanella's similar feat at his trial before the Inquisition, and, in the same speech recommends by inference the Calabrian's De Sensu Rerum:

Je connus aussy Campanella; ce fut moy qui l'advise, pendant qu'il estoit à l'Inquisition à Rome, de stiler son visage et son corps aux grimasses et aux postures ordinaires de ceux dont il avoit besoin de connoistre l'intérieur afin d'exciter chez soy, par une mesme

assiette, les pensées que cette mesme situation avoit appellées dans ses adversaires, parce qu'ainsy il mesnageroit mieux leur Ame quand il la connoistroit. Il commença, à ma prière, un livre que nous intitulasmes De Sensu rerum.<sup>45</sup>

Whether Cyrano knew the work at first hand or not, his notion of knowing by simulation of the object known if considered in conjunction with the earlier episode of the metamorphoses of the sun-inhabitants, where the homonculae know by becoming the object they contemplate in their mind, is highly reminiscent of the sensationist aspect of Campanella's theory of knowledge, which he, in turn, founded upon Telesian empiricism. (The importance and the role afforded heat in all three authors' works is identical.)

Campanella had argued that 'Cognoscere est esse'; knowledge is being, being knowledge, for knowing consists in the subject's assimilation of the object known, in its 'becoming' the object known, while yet retaining fully its own identity:

Everything knows itself to be, is contrary to nonbeing, and loves itself. Therefore, everything knows itself through itself, and it knows other things not through itself, but inasmuch as it becomes similar to them. This similarity is so great that one thing perceives other things by perceiving itself changed into, and made, the other things, which are not what it is itself.<sup>46</sup>

Campanella's empirical explanation of knowledge is founded

45. A. M., p. 35.

46. Del Senso delle Cose e della Magia, ed. A. Bruero, Bari, 1925, pp. 83-4; cited by Bonansea, op. cit., p. 106.

upon a thoroughgoing sensationism, upon the conception of a universe in which all is sentient, all being imbued with the world-soul, and, in which all is in all. If we know by assimilation, this is possible because we are becoming something which we already contain within our own being: all knowledge is a form of self-consciousness and of self-realization: the more we are, the more we know; the more we know, the more we are. Bonansea, in presenting an exposition of Campanella's approach to knowledge concludes that 'his basic tenet [is] that all knowledge is fundamentally knowledge of the self, either through self-presence or through self-representation of the external objects.'<sup>47</sup>

The similarity between this theory of knowledge and Cyrano's depiction of the character 'Campanella', as well as his account of the sun-inhabitants' metamorphoses is striking. The thought-reading idea is less extreme than Campanella's most extreme position, but the various metamorphoses of the sun-people goes much further, since, here, the idea of becoming is taken absolutely literally. In line with the 'cognoscere est esse' theory, the sun-men become the object contemplated, without ceasing to be themselves; the reason that they can do this is that they use in their becoming the atoms which make up their normal body: how it is that there are not too many, or insufficient numbers of certain shapes and sizes of atoms is never made clear, the aim being to illustrate the contention that potentiality may be rendered into pure act intentionally, by an act of will (the force of

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47. Op. cit., p. 115.

the imagination). The speed with which each sun-man takes on his new form, that is, his new existence, illustrates again that knowledge is immediate and entire, since knowledge is being the thing known.

The sun-men experience an existence close to that traditionally afforded God, for they, like Him, are at once pure act, or all-being, while containing within themselves both their own nature and that of the beings they have created. They experience Existence at first hand, and differ from God only in that they cannot experience all manners of being simultaneously. Above all, however, this episode illustrates the completely different import that Cyrano affords the concept of the microcosm from his predecessors and contemporaries: Instead of placing Man in a privileged position at the centre of things, here it serves to show that the all in all theory of matter coupled with that of the mobilizing powers of fire allows of the actualizing of all creatures' potential, and in particular, Man's, if sufficiently exploited. It is this episode also, which points to the dissimilarity of context between Cyrano's use of Campanella's idea and the metaphysical framework in which the Calabrian had formulated it.

Campanella believed that all knowledge stems from self-knowledge, and that Man can attain to a knowledge of the world around him, because he assumed that, as a result of God's guidance, as many sense-organs have been constructed in our body as there are entities to be communicated by things; again, in general, all things are true insofar that they are modelled upon divine Truth, and Man's ability to know by being



is clearly, albeit imperfectly, analogous to God's wisdom. Natural things not only are true insofar that they imitate divine ideas, but are derived from those divine ideas.<sup>48</sup> In short, his epistemology is couched in Platonic metaphysics; there is not merely one kind of knowing, through experiencing (that is, through sensation), for Truth exists on two levels, our knowing being but a shadow of the truth of things on the plane of an absolute Reality.

The Platonic element in Campanella's epistemology fashions his sensationism, and, indeed, guarantees its veracity. It is particularly piquant to know that he rejected the Democritean theory of sensation, arguing that the emission of atoms from the object observed would alter its nature, by reducing it gradually in size.<sup>49</sup> For Cyrano bases his borrowings from the Calabrian on just that corpuscular theory, and, true to pattern, ignores completely the metaphysical basis of his predecessor's thought. As in Campanella's Città del Sole, so in the De Sensu Rerum, the theistic basis of his predecessor's thinking is so clearly apparent as to be central to an understanding of that philosophy. Cyrano accommodates this sensationism to a world completely alien to his source, insofar that it is a Godless, unspiritual one, and, as in our comparison with Bruno, we perceive that this transposition was made possible by the adoption of atomism. Once again, whether

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48. Ibid., p. 102 (last paragraph); p. 133 (third paragraph); p. 93.

49. Ibid., p. 100.

wittingly or not, Cyrano lends to the work of a sixteenth-century philosopher, whom he here explicitly admires, a completely different import from the original, taking from it an idea which permeates the Soleil: that access to knowledge is through direct and personal experience, and that that access is immediate, even, in some cases, purely intuited, and it is at once simple and entire. This concept is already promulgated in the Lune through the episode in which Dyrcona has the opportunity to eat of the fruits of the Arbre de Science; the various allegories of the Soleil, and, in particular, the sun-spot experience of Dyrcona of the Universal Language, leave us in no doubt as to Cyrano's notion of Truth and its apprehension, at least in idealistic terms.

When, in the Garden of Eden, Dyrcona is shown the Tree of Life, he is offered the opportunity of acquiring Knowledge - that is, the secrets of Life - immediately through a single act: the eating of one of its fruits in a rindless state.<sup>50</sup> That opportunity eludes him, not because man by his very nature cannot attain to such wisdom, but simply because Dyrcona, in his impatience, fails to peel the apple. The explanation of his failure is a natural, not a miraculous, one.

Erica Harth interprets the episode thus:

Cyrano relates that God, having expelled Adam from paradise, punishes him by rubbing his gums with the skin of the ignorance-producing fruit from the Arbre de Science. When Cyrano himself eats one of the apples his soul is plunged into a dark night of ignorance. In

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50. A.M., pp. 28-32.

the satirical accounts of original sin, Cyrano equates knowledge with ignorance and mecks man's belief that true knowledge is possible.<sup>51</sup>

Is this an altogether accurate exegesis, however? for while it is, indeed, true that the apple may instil ignorance, it does so only if improperly handled. Again, while the apple embraces opposites, knowledge is by no means 'equated' with ignorance, for each opposite is represented by a clearly distinct part of the apple, and knowledge in its very entirety is available in the pulp of the fruit. It is that knowledge that fruit and tree represent, ignorance being merely a peripheral exterior which prevents those who bear ignorance within themselves from partaking of it. In other words, they are uninitiated in the handling of the fruit and ignorant of its anatomy. This ignorance seems to consist, then, in mistaking the external appearance of truth for its substance, which idea, it is true, would seem to run counter to our findings so far. However, the context here is quite different from that of the later episodes of the Autre Monde in that it is theistic, and has to do specifically - in the case of Adam anyway - with original sin. Dyrcona, for his part, believes that his failure to gain access to knowledge is directly connected with Enoch's discontent.<sup>52</sup> At all events, purely technically, the story could progress no further were Dyrcona to learn all, just as the Soleil ends at that point where Descartes, now in the regions of Truth itself, is about to

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51.. Op. cit., p. 119.

52. A.M., p. 29 and pp. 31-2.

tell all. What is most striking about the passage is the speed of acquisition or loss of knowledge, and the all or nothing nature of the deal. The same characteristic obtains in Dyrcona's comprehension of the language of Truth and in his witnessing of the sun-men's metamorphoses. Effortlessness translates this idea in the stories of the arbre de science and of the langue universelle, mobility in that of the metamorphosis of bejewelled tree into the handsome youth. In all three cases, there are no half measures.

The conviction that Nature is an unity is pushed to its limit in the sun-spot man's description of the universal language of Truth. What he describes Dyrcona experiences and, thereby understands that very essence of things that had been offered him, and lost, in his tasting of the apple; for Dyrcona's comprehension of his fellow creatures is natural, immediate, and necessarily entire in every particularity since it is an intuition. Just as Nature embraces all infinites, so its language conveys all meanings. The sun-spot man explains that

dans les sciences il y avoit un Vray, hors lequel on estoit toujours éloigné du facile; que plus un idiome s'éloignoit de ce Vray, plus il se rencontroit au dessous de la conception et de moins facile intelligence.

De mesme, continuoit-il, dans la Musique ce Vray ne se rencontre jamais que l'âme aussi-tost soulevée ne s'y porte aveuglement. Nous ne le voyons pas, mais nous sentons que Nature le voit; et sans pouvoir comprendre en quelle sorte nous en sommes absorbez, il ne laisse pas de nous ravir. 53

This language is the expression of Nature, and so must be non-rationally based, accommodating as it does all modes of existence. Similarly, it must have existed for all time, a fact which Dyrcona understands, for, he interjects, Adam must have used this tongue to converse with the animals. If this language successfully achieves that which all those who actually tried to deduce such a universal tongue in the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries aspired after, that is, that each word should name not only an object or creature, but with it, its very essence, this is because 'cet idiome est l'instinct ou la voix de la Nature, il doit estre intelligible à tout ce qui vit sous le ressort de la Nature'.<sup>54</sup>

All creatures are in accord, and all harmonizes in Nature, all being reducible to one and the same principle; the Universal language expresses this concept of Truth which, in its turn, marries with Cyrano's monism. All must be, ideally, simple, because one. The reference to music is used in exactly the same way as in the 'Campanella' passage referred to above,<sup>(on page 404)</sup> and reminds us that such a notion of Truth, with its insistence upon its unity, universality, and simplicity, characterizes the aspirations of an age: Mersenne was interested in harmonics because he saw in it a science as exact as mathematics, which embodied a natural trueness, while, if we are to

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54. A.M., p. 129. On the theories propounded on the perfect language see J. R. Knowlson's unpublished doctoral thesis entitled The Concept of Universal Language in the Work of the Idéologues, University of Reading, 1964, Introductory Chapter, and his article in the Journal of the History of Ideas, vol. xxiv, no. 2, April-June 1963, pp. 269-78, on 'The Ideal Languages of Veiras, Foigny and Tyssot de Patot'.

believe the Discours de la Méthode, Descartes originally had recourse to mathematics because prompted by a longing after the discovery of a Scientia Universalis.<sup>55</sup> For Cyrano, however, the aspiration is couched in far less rigorous and more simplistic, if more imaginatively engaging, terms, and terms more reminiscent of Descartes's original influences, tinged with occultism, those of a Fludd, or even a Bacon, than of the New philosophers. Thus, for instance, the Sun is represented as the realm of Truth, and the seat of the very secret of life, and this contention is supported by the supposition that its very matter consists of countless souls or fiery essences.<sup>56</sup> So, on the sun-spot, Dyrcona is already within the solar regions, and directly influenced by the sun.

The universal language cannot consist in technical skill, nor be subjected to rational enquiry. As a langue matrice, it must be accessible to the lowest link in the chain of being; as an instinctive tongue, it must be spoken and apprehended instinctively. In this, it would seem to by-pass sensation as well as reason, at least, save the most rudimentary sensation in all matter: the dynamic 'sentence' of the life force. It bears no resemblance to the theoreticians' attempts to institute a language of essences, and, functionally, is diametrically opposed to the Cartesian conception of language. There is no point in trying to understand how it works, Cyrano's aims here being neither linguistic nor conceptual, just as his

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55. See Mersenne's Harmonie universelle, Paris, 1636-7, where he affirms that sound is movement (referred to by R. Lenoble in his Mersenne ou la naissance du Mécanisme, Paris, 1943, p. 44, See also R. Descartes, op. cit., Part I.

56. A.M., p. 182.

political systems have little to do with politics. For here, as there, the emphasis is upon the macrocosm and upon the possibility of Man's really being in harmony with his environment, as an integral part of it. As in the use he makes of the doctrine of the great chain of being, and as in his variation on the theme of the microcosm in the sun-inhabitants' metamorphoses, so, in his theory of language, the ultimate effect is very different from that intended by the original elaborators of the concept. Man is most knowledgeable, and truest to himself, when he runs with the stream of life.

Are not the anomalies in the critical exegeses to which we referred at the beginning of this chapter a reflection of the rather different purposes served, on the one hand, by the monde à rebours satirical approach, and, on the other, by the depiction of Nature's ways? A conflicting interpretation must occur when each is concentrated on at the expense of the other, and when the specific narrative function of each is not taken into account. For, each tackles the same questions, and provides the same answers, but expressed in variant modes. Even more, this would seem to be no accident, since it is clear that the distinction between the insistence upon human failings and the relativity of vision of different species, on the one hand, and the simplicity and completeness of Truth as encountered in the solar regions, on the other, is deliberately emphasized by the story-teller. Given that he seeks always to show how marvellous or 'miraculous' natural phenomena can be, and that the principle of the coincidence of contraries helps to further this aim and to describe plausibly a universe in which all is one while each part of that unity is necessarily relative to all other parts, his account is basically coherent throughout

the Autre Monde. Again, as we have found earlier in this study, Cyrano's focus is essentially adjusted to moral rather than to epistemological perspective. To seek to impose an epistemological theory upon him is necessarily to distort our vision of a narrative that is, by definition, fictional. This is equally true of the opinions expressed by Séjanus, and even of those promulgated in the letter 'Contre les Sorciers'.

From the critic's point of view, then, is there not justification for differentiating radically between the condition of men as we know it, that is, as it is revealed in the monde renversé type satire of the Lune and <sup>of the</sup> bird kingdom in the Soleil, and the largely allegorical representations of Nature, including homo sapiens, in the greater part of the Soleil, a vision already hinted at in the treatment of the Biblical allegory of the Garden of Eden, a Paradise, in the Lune? The daemon, we are told, belongs to a species separate, and more highly-placed, on the ladder of being; though natural, he is not a man, and, originating in the sun, he, like the sun-inhabitants, can take on other forms, one of which is human. He serves a satirical purpose in the novel, just as do the birds in the sun-regions, who are presented conversely as 'real' birds, some of whom have been to our earth: they are as a group of the same species, in contrast to, say, the phoenix, whom the reader knows to be a fabulous mythical being. Generally speaking, a distinction is made, then, between the moon and the sun, and their respective inhabitants, throughout the Autre Monde, the moon being likened to our earth, both being planets of identical nature, the sun, already in the Lune, being presented as the



centre of life and life-giving. Does not Cyrano make use of the new astronomer's conception of the moon, and the hermetic philosophers' conception of the sun, in an ideological, not a philosophical way? The Moon is exploited, as Dr. Harth demonstrates well, to reveal man's stupidities, his failings and weaknesses. Here, then, let us look in a little more detail at the role played by the sun.

That the sun is conceived of as central in position while the universe is described as infinite is not so great an anomaly as it might at first sight appear. Bruno had talked in just the same terms, and Campanella, an advocate of the new astronomy, does likewise. Presumably, all three assume that by 'central' ~~one understands~~ central to our solar system. As for Cardano, for Cyrano, also, the sun takes on this special importance on physical grounds, being the hottest natural region that we know, and heat being the life-inducer.<sup>57</sup> Again, it is worthy of note that it is Cyrano's character 'Campanella' who describes the sun as a collection of all those souls that have departed our earth as well as the surrounding planets, that is, as a corporeal and global representation of what is tantamount to the world-soul. This passage incorporates into Cyrano's physical universe a notion of the sun derived from hermetic philosophy; in Cyrano, only the idea of attraction by sympathy remains from that source's concept:

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57. See J.-R. Charbonnel, *op.cit.*, p. 296.

Les âmes viennent, par un principe de ressemblance, se joindre à cette masse de lumière, car ce Monde-cy n'est formé d'autre chose que des Esprits de tout ce qui meurt dans les orbes d'autour, comme sont Mercure, Vénus, la Terre, Mars, Jupiter et Saturne.

Ainsi dès qu'une Plante, une Beste ou un Homme expirent, leurs âmes montent, sans s'éteindre, à sa sphère, de mesme que vous voyez la flamme d'une chandelle y voler en pointe, malgré le suif qui la tient par les pieds. Or toutes ces âmes unies qu'elles sont à la source du jour, et purgées de la grosse matière qui les empeschôit, elles exercent des fonctions bien plus nobles que celles de croistre, de sentir et de raisonner; car elles sont employées à former le sang et les esprits vitaux du Soleil, ce grand et parfait animal: Et c'est aussi pourquoy vous ne devez point douter que le Soleil n'opère de l'esprit bien plus parfaitement que vous, puis que c'est par la chaleur d'un million de ces âmes rectifiées, dont la sienne est un élixir, qu'il connoist le secret de la vie, qu'il influé à la matière de vos Mondes la puissance d'engendrer, qu'il rend des corps capables de se sentir estre, et enfin qu'il se fait voir et fait voir toutes choses. 58

Though, as we have seen in chapter II above (pp. 156-60), Cyrano draws here upon Neoplatonic theories, this passage would seem to have more to do with the creation of a charming and engaging vision, in keeping with Cyrano's overall picture of the universe, than with philosophy as such. What is communicated to the reader is the idea that the sun, wholly natural, and the properties of which are explained within the terms of Cyrano's physics, is a 'miraculous', wondrous land, just as its inhabitants perform apparently miraculous and indeed wondrous, though natural, feats. Scientific or

logical precision, in these descriptions, gives way to the main purpose, as it would seem, of the descriptions, which is to demonstrate that the sun, centre of Life and source of all truth, affords a vision of the splendours of existence. And so, the sun, though a globe like the planets, has no centre of attraction, and seems not to move as they. Though it gives out a great heat, Dyrcona is not burned by it as he journeys through it. He becomes almost weightless, and diaphanous: he, like the natives of the sun-regions, is less burdened by matter than earthly creatures. His bodily heat being maintained by the atmosphere around him, he needs no sustenance.<sup>59</sup>

It is surely no accident that it is on the Sun that the Kingdoms of Truth and Love, and the Philosopher's realm, are located; the centre of Life, the home of all that is valid and morally valuable, the sun provides a fitting cadre against which to project an essentially poetic - non-literal - vision. Dyrcona's first-hand experiencing of the Language of Truth sets the scene; from the moment he sets foot on the sun itself, he witnesses one 'miraculous' event or scene after the other. He enters the land of Medieval allegory, and, waking from a dream, enters the world of literary dreams, confronted as he is by a bejewelled tree which had not existed prior to his sleeping.

Cyrano seems to be at pains never to confuse the

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59. A.M., p. 137; pp. 125-6; pp. 134-5; p. 125.

human and the real with the superhuman and the possible, however.<sup>60</sup> Dyrcona may change in degree, he does not change in kind; thus, it is explicitly stated that he lacks the necessary intensity of heat to change form as radically as can the natives of the sun. Even the philosophers, retaining their human identity, like Dyrcona, prefer the shadier regions of the sun.<sup>61</sup> That all the phenomena Dyrcona observes are natural adds authenticity to the theory of knowledge expounded in the Soleil, but equally, the distinction between what man is, and what man's dreams and aspirations should be, is maintained rigorously.

Already in the Lune, the way is prepared. The Garden of Eden has been transported to the moon; the daemon of Socrates originates in the sun. He is, thus, closer in nature to the sun-men than to earth-man. His function in the novel is akin to that of a Renaissance 'magus' or 'genius', half-way between man and angel; his genus and status is distinctly super-human.

For all these reasons, we cannot endorse entirely either the conclusion of Dr. Alcover, or the application of the term 'dogmatic' to Cyrano's theory of knowledge suggested by Dr. Lavers. At the same time, Dr. Harth's concentration on Cyrano's satire on man to the detriment of his depiction of an ideal, namely, of man as an integral part of his environment, proves even wider of the mark. It is when we confront

60. Cf. his own contention in the letter 'Contre les Sorciers', E, p. 68: 'On ne doit croire d'un homme que ce qui est humain, c'est à dire possible et ordinaire'.

61. A.M., p. 145; p. 192.

the two aspects of the work, the disharmony both within human society and between humanity and the rest of Nature on the one hand, and the harmony of man with beast and plant on the other, that the moral intent of Cyrano's fictional creation comes to the fore. And, if we were in any doubt as to the imaginative qualities of these two portraits, the sandwiching between them of the sorcerer - hunting episode in Toulouse provides us with a frightening and only too realistic picture of everyday reality against which to assess the ideal regions of the sun and the distinction between the actual and the desirable, life as it was in Cyrano's day, and life as he would wish it.

CHAPTER VIIIBELIEFS AND ATTITUDES

To situate a work, it is necessary to do more than simply to relate the thought contained in it to that of its author's contemporaries, for, in every person, there exists an amalgam of prejudices and convictions that go to make up his outlook, albeit unknown to himself. Is it not this that shapes the persona which the writer offers to the public, and this, more than anything else, that defines the element in his writing which his readers consider to be characteristic of them?

Throughout this study, I have tried to discover and to assess Cyrano's ideas in terms of Cyrano, using knowledge gleaned from the works of his immediate predecessors and of his contemporaries as a means of reconstituting the conditions in which he was writing, rather than to look for possible sources of his ideas, or to adjudge his work by criteria formulated after his time. One important aspect of his work remains to be examined, namely, his modes of expression. Does he have a particular or favourite method of approach? Are there features of his style that recur, or that differ from the commonly agreed rhetorical devices learnt by all College-educated Frenchmen of his century? Does Cyrano have a special style? How does he use language, and what light does this throw upon his way of thinking?

The whole question of the role of language, and of the nature and role of rhetoric, in the seventeenth century, is a complicated and thorny one. As Peter France so rightly points out, in the Preface to his book on Rhetoric and Truth in France: Descartes to Diderot (Oxford, 1972), 'rhetorical studies are not new today'. His bibliographical essay, at the close of his book, provides a useful adjunct to his own, comprehensive, survey of the rhetorical traditions accepted by writers up to the end of the ancien régime, and to his examination of several well-known philosophers' and creative writers' exploitation of, or departure from, those traditions. It is not my intention to enter into this debate; the information provided by France, like the study of one particular author immediately contemporaneous with Cyrano, by Patricia Topliss, that is, her book entitled The Rhetoric of Pascal (Leicester, 1966), have proved of value in building up a picture of the notions of language mooted in Cyrano's day. Michel Foucault, for his part, has tackled the same subject from the rather more phenomenological standpoint of the structures discernible in linguistic usage and in the changing function of language from the Renaissance to the present, in France, in his book, Les Mots et les choses (Paris, 1966).

On the particular question of the 'baroque', a term now generally accepted as a description of certain literary devices, and/or of the literature of the preclassical period in regard to France (though variously interpreted), I have drawn especially upon the work of Jean Rousset, including his

first study of the field, La Littérature de l'âge baroque en France (Paris, 1954), and his L'Intérieur et l'extérieur (Paris, 1968). My own understanding of the term is largely dependent upon the concepts elucidated by Rousset; to this foundation was added the findings of F. J. Warnke, who has studied the subject in the European context, but with particular reference to the creative writings of seventeenth-century English authors, presented in his book entitled Versions of Baroque (New Haven, U.S.A., 1972). Since so much in seventeenth-century French literature derives from the literature and thought of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Italy, and since the connection between one Italian, Marino, and French writers of Cyrano's day, is proven, Marino having stayed in Paris from 1615 to 1623, I have consulted the only full-length study of his life and works, that of J.V. Mirollo entitled The Poet of the Marvellous: Giambattista Marino, and published in 1963 in New York.

The first full-length study of Cyrano's Letters was published in 1973, in Montreal, by Dr. Jeanne Goldin. In her Cyrano et l'art de la pointe, she lends serious consideration to Cyrano's world of metaphor; proceeding inductively, she examines copious examples of pointes to be found in the Letters. She then links her findings with Cyrano's work as a whole. Her terms of reference are refreshingly wide, since she relates her description of the pointes to seventeenth-century Italian and Spanish theorists' descriptions of similar figures of speech used by their own countrys' writers; she also takes into account critical appreciations of the baroque writer,



drawing, in particular, upon the works of Rousset already mentioned above.<sup>1</sup>

All these critical examinations have proved invaluable, and have been taken into account in what follows. I have attempted, for my part, to explore the linguistico-stylistic aspect of Cyrano's imaginative work on the basis of his practice in the Autre Monde. Firstly, I have analysed examples of analogical argumentation in the Autre Monde, concentrating upon those passages where ideas seem to be culled from alchemy, and upon instances of emblem and allegory. In a second section, I have looked at more specifically baroque aspects, and, in particular, at an allegory which uses Ovidian material (from the Metamorphoses). My conclusions at this stage, have been checked against those of Mme Goldin respecting the Letters. This part of the chapter is, perhaps, specially valuable in that the chapter as a whole, including the bulk of this part of it, had already been drafted when Dr. Goldin's book was published. Thus, the one study may well be regarded as a valid check to the other. It goes without saying, that my own has been enriched by Dr. Goldin's perspicacious and sensitive analyses and broadened by her insight into the mechanisms of the pointe. Thus, I have been able to substantiate the hint of a link between Cyrano's notion of the

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1. A Structural linguistic examination of the 'Lune, ou l'Autre' was published by Maurice Laugaa, in the form of an article of that title, in Poétique, 1970, no.1, pp. 282-96, and is cited in Dr. Goldin's bibliography. For a fuller appreciation of Dr. Goldin's book, see below pp. 478-82. and Appendix B.

world in the two novels and the metaphorical universe of the Letters, in large measure, thanks to Dr. Goldin's enquiry, which proceeds in the opposite direction.

In a third, and final, section, I have tried to situate Cyrano's peculiar language-problem, namely, that of describing a wholly materialistic universe through the terminology designed to describe a dualist one (at once material and spiritual), in terms of the changing role of language in philosophy in the seventeenth century, and of the ways in which philosophers tackled the problem of finding a suitable expression for new ideas.

In an article on the Lune, published at about the same time as the books of Erica Harth and Madeleine Alcover, Alexander Dunlop argues that Cyrano's satire centres upon one kind of 'wrong thinking', which he describes as 'that of reasoning by analogy. Right-thinking ... would be a more or less inductive logic of cause-and-effect ("causes naturelles") involving both sense perception and reason, such as Cyrano practices on his way to the moon: "Je cherchais des yeux et de la pensée ce qui en pouvait être la cause" ...'. Herein, maintains Dunlop, lies the coherence of the work. With the term 'analogy' he sums up all those cases where Cyrano's characters are 'wrong-headed' in their understanding, in that they jump to the conclusion that they can interpret events and data correctly invariably by analogy with what they already know. For Cyrano, however, argues Dunlop, 'the principle involved is that all the potentially knowable may not be understood in terms of what we already know'. He goes on to

say that anthropomorphism results also from analogical argumentation.<sup>2</sup> Be this as it may, if one examines Cyrano's own methods of reasoning in the Autre Monde, one cannot help but be struck by the frequency with which he resorts to analogy.

Certainly, there is less evidence of sustained parallelism in the Lune than the Soleil: without the recourse to emblem and allegory, much of the second novel would not exist, let alone lose credence. Though less obtrusive, similes abound, however, in Cyrano's exegeses of 'scientific' theories. Practically every notion which we have examined in chapter II above, in our outline of the physical world described by Cyrano, relies upon his own comparisons with everyday phenomena, and/or draws upon theories which, themselves, originated in that way. More arresting, and common, is the use of extended metaphor, as in the second account of the theory of matter of the Spaniard, Gonzales. The majority of Cyrano's ideas are couched in analogical terms, often inherited with the theory; but, in addition, he delights in building analogy on analogy, such complexity, far from being arbitrary, serving to draw together into a coherent whole ideas of widely disparate origin. The most obvious instances of this are to be found in two sets of ideas fundamental in the novels, namely, the plurality of worlds theme and the conviction of the life-giving properties of fire. In both, verbal and visual resemblances support the main

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2. 'The Narrative Function of Ideas in Cyrano's Estats et Empires de la Lune', in Romance Notes, XIII, 1, Autumn 1971, pp. 137-41 (Quotations from pp. 138-9).

argument, to convince the reader of the veracity of the theory being expounded, each analogy helping to sustain the other mutually.

The cironalité universelle theory, introduced as it is by the 'infinite worlds in worlds' proposition, convinces, in the main, precisely because the reader has already followed Dyrcona on his journey through space, when the proposition was made, in fictional terms, at first hand. At the same time, this passage constitutes a variation on the 'all in all' theme and prepares the way for the atomic theory of the formation of living organisms which is to follow it. Later, on the sun, its inhabitants act in a manner which exemplifies the 'worlds in worlds' theory presented in the cironalité episode of the earlier novel, as well as that of atomic 'creation' and, along with it, the 'all in all' theory. The parallelism of the four episodes is striking.

In all four passages there is a similar play on the idea of centre, no-centre. The sun is at the centre of things as a seed in an apple, or as the world-soul, giving Life to all, while, in terms of the cosmos, it, as well as our galaxy, holds no central position. Likewise, in the cironalité universelle theory, man, as host to the mites within him, guides and channels their movement through his will-power; at the same time, each mite has a certain leeway for free movement, as an autonomous being. In terms of the smallest material unit, the atom, again there exists an autonomous centre of activity,

insofar that the atom's movement is determined by its shape, while, conjoined with, or acting in the vicinity of, other atoms, each works as an integral part of an organism, the direction and extent of activity of each atomic unit being decided by the random formation of atoms in which it happens to find itself. No amorphous, indeterminate body seems ever to be formed, just as the mites in the human body never cause it to lose its recognizable characteristics. In this particular, the atom and the mite are similar to the sun-inhabitants, but all three differ here, when forming a composite body, from the cosmos, which being infinite, cannot be thus limited, nor defined as an entity. The sun-inhabitants' metamorphoses take place within the same set of relationships between leader and led, as those which characterize the mite-comprized man, as we have already shown: homunculæ corresponding to mites rather than to homo sapiens. Lastly, the infinite plurality of worlds are analogous in every respect to the infinitely numbered atoms, though of a finite number of shapes, which travel randomly through space. Thus, the analogy works in every combination of each or some of the four examples chosen. In the case of the parallel between sun and fiery atom, there is also an exact visual analogy added to the qualitative one.<sup>3</sup>

The relationship which Cyrano elucidates between

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3. A.M., pp. 11-12, p. 182; pp. 71-3; pp. 138-47; pp. 14-16 and 75-8.

roundness and mobility in establishing that the earth moves, is paralleled in the fiery atom, but not in the case of the sun, however, and Cyrano is not apparently aware of the anomaly here.<sup>4</sup> None of these theories would bear the scrutiny of controlled experiment; some could not be verified or disproved by this method; each sustains the other, however, so that the composite effect lends greater veracity to each than each would enjoy, should it exist in the story without the others. All these theories parallel each other because they rest upon a similar notion of action and upon a similar set of relationships; the more examples of such phenomena that are cited, the more plausible they appear. The use of terminology more fitted to the infinite plurality of worlds theory, in the introduction to the circularité universelle passage, suggests that this analogical method is wittingly adopted, with such an object in mind, just as the journey, albeit a fictional one, of Dyrcona from France to Canada, had lent veracity to the plurality of worlds theory and the attendant astronomical system, and just as the Cardano-type incident which begins the Autre Monde and puts into Dyrcona's mind the idea that the Moon may well be an Earth such as our own, prepares the way for both lunar travel and the monde renversé styled satire.

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4. A.M., pp. 11-12. The anomaly is all the more striking that the case for a stationary sun immediately precedes the 'proof' of a mobile earth. The argument derives from Copernicus (cf. above, ch. II, p. 152, n.30).

This technique is pursued much further, and to less credible limits, in the Soleil insofar that purely literary forms of analogy - mythological and emblematic allegory in the main - are endowed with exactly the same function in the novel as had been more recognizably scientific and philosophical ideas and arguments in the Lune. The allegories of the Soleil cohere, contrasting only with the initial Toulousain episode, whereas the biblical garden of Eden allegory tends to contrast with the rest of the Lune, the majority of which is reminiscent of the stock arguments of Christian apologists on the one hand, and libertin satire of them, on the other, and of contemporary philosophical debate in general. The Toulousain episode lends both selenian and solarian narratives more rather than less credence, in that it creates a clear distinction between other worlds and our own, and, also, between moon and sun, while presenting the same condemnation of human mores as that promulgated in those alternative worlds. If the style differs, the attitudes and moral purpose are identical.

It is largely these sun allegories, however, that have given openings to those who regard Cyrano as an extravagant, fanciful writer, and also, to those who have given consideration to the idea that Cyrano was a hermetist and/or alchemist, or at least, endorsed the ideas and outlook of that type of thinker.<sup>5</sup> Apart from a number of references to substances

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5. The only intensive, systematic examination of alchemical connotations in Cyrano's work remains that of Luciano Erba, however (in an article entitled 'L'Incidenza della magia nell'opera di Cyrano de Bergerac', published in Contributi del Seminario di Filologia moderna, Serie francese, vol.1, Pubblicazioni dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, vol. LXXII, pp. 1-74). Even here, the content is descriptive rather than analytical. Erba's adverse opinion (ibid. pp. 40-1) of E. Canseliet's article ('Cyrano de Bergerac, philosophe hermétique', in Cahiers d'Hermès, I, 1947, pp. 65-82) seems fully justified.

used, or referred to, by the alchemist,<sup>6</sup> which serve, in the main, as comparisons or descriptive embroidery, demonstrating the marvellous nature of these regions of outer space, it is those passages that describe the various powers and phenomena attributable to fire, or heat, that appear to lean upon alchemical theory and practice, while those that refer to (occult) sympathies and antipathies have, in the main, to do with the 'all in all' theory.

If we take the theme of heat and the allegories employed in treating of its powers, we discover that the four allegories which deal with the subject of the promethean role of fire, are those which approximate most nearly to the alchemical art. This is hardly surprising, since the ultimate aim of the alchemist was to discover the secret of Life, and his means entailed the use of heat, and since Cyrano attributes to the force of heat Life and its maintenance. The first allegory, that is, the metamorphoses of the sun-inhabitants, demonstrates the creative power of the forceful imagination; the second, the three coctions theory, illustrates how the three main types of creature, vegetative, sensitive, and rational, are created out of the appropriate mixture and duration of heat and radical cold (humidity); the third, a short, emblematic description of the phoenix by that bird, illustrates the life-giving property of fire as a self-

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6. See A.M. pp. 35-6: The daemon offers Tristan l'Hermite three phials containing respectively 'l'huile de Talc, l'autre de Poudre de projection, et la dernière d'Or potable, c'est-à-dire de ce sel végétatif dont vos chimistes promettent l'Eternité'; p.20: the first flying device - phials of dew around the waist - may have alchemical connotations (see below p. 447 ); pp. 188-9: Alchemical allusion serves as emblematic description in the depiction of the river of Imagination (it is of 'de pur or potable', 'l'huile de Talc', and contains 'un grand nombre de pierres philosophales'. Its waters provide a dwelling for remoras, sirens, and salamanders).



perpetuating force, and the fourth, the account of the battle of the remora and salamander, provides a variation on the Telesian-type theory accepted throughout the Autre Monde and already exemplified in the three coctions episode, of the necessity of the existence of the opposed forces of heat and cold in all organisms in order to maintain life (or, in other words, the necessity of the coexistence of antipathetic forces in order to maintain a stable state). All these passages clearly depend upon one and the same main premiss, namely, that of the life-giving properties of heat.<sup>7</sup>

The tree is a common-place symbol of the alchemist's 'work', and one much used by emblematisers. Cyrano resorts to it on several occasions: as symbol of Knowledge, with the arbre de science in terrestrial paradise; as representative of a sentient, self-conscious form of vegetation, with the talking oaks in the grove of Dodona, and, in the story of the trees formed out of the decayed corpses of Pylades and Orestes recounted by one of the oaks, as an explanation of the force of love and of the magnet.<sup>8</sup> As Erba points out, just as in the pursuits of the alchemist, so too in the Tree of Life episode, initiation is a prerequisite of knowledge;<sup>9</sup> the whole point

7. A.M., pp. 138-47; pp. 130-2; 147-8; 176-81.

8. A.M., pp. 26-32; pp. 165-8; pp. 168-76.

9. Op.cit., pp. 51-7. For Erba the Autre Monde represents a spiritual journey of initiation (ibid., p.51).

of the talking trees, by contrast, is that their ability to speak is natural to them, since they enjoy the same sentience as the rest of the cosmos, sentience being common to all Nature's creatures. The episode of the 'Arbres amans', Pylades and Orestes, relies upon belief in a universe of sympathies and antipathies, but it does not appear to have alchemical connotations. It belongs rather to the Daphne myth archetype, and I shall deal with this episode in the second section of this chapter, in that context.

The phoenix, like the tree, is a frequently used pictorial symbol of the alchemist's 'work', representing every stage: the destruction, purification, and rebirth of substances; for, it changes into a superior form as a direct result of the action of the same fire that had initially destroyed it.<sup>10</sup> The three coctions consist in an alchemical process, namely, that of achieving a change of form that is also one of substance, by 'cookings' or 'boilings' (distillation). However, the basic idea of creatures being hatched out of the earth through the influence of heat and moisture upon it is to be found in various writers of Antiquity, and is, in any case, a notion which, one suspects, is to be found in all cultures, as the analyses of, say, Lévi-Strauss, would suggest.

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10. See Dom A-J. Pernéty, Dictionnaire mytho-hermétique, Paris, 1758, under 'Phénix': 'Le phénix n'est autre que le souffre rouge des Philosophes'; E.J. Holmyard, Alchemy, Harmondsworth, 1957 (Penguin Books), illustrations 12 and 16; C.G. Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, Collected works, vol. 12, London, 1953, illustration on page 272, with the phoenix representing the culmination of the 'work', and, on page 443, one where it symbolizes the resurrection.

In particular, we find accounts akin to Cyrano's in Ovid's Metamorphoses as well as in Lucretius.<sup>11</sup>

The remora, known as the fish thought by the Ancients to arrest ships in full course, might appear to be rather an abstruse emblem as used by Cyrano. However, the Dictionnaire mytho-hermétique of Dom A-J. Pernéty (Paris, 1758) lends to it a second, alchemical, meaning: Under 'Rémore', we find, 'Les Philosophes hermétiques ont donné le nom de Rémore et d'Echénéis à la partie fixe de la matière de l'oeuvre, par allusion à la propriété de ce poisson, parce que cette partie fixe arrête la partie volatile en la fixant'. This definition concurs with the behaviour of the fish in its battle with the salamander. The salamander, familiar to emblematisist and alchemist alike, does not feature in the Dictionary, but it has been known from Antiquity on as a lizard which thrives and finds nourishment in flames, In the sixteenth century, as well as being the chosen emblem of François Iier, it was a commonly used symbol for love. Cyrano may well be drawing upon that commonplace when, in the fifth of his published love letters, he describes himself as 'la bête à feu'. According to Jung, the salamander embodies the mercurial spirit of the prima materia, and was, thus, the sign for an essential alchemical ingredient. Cyrano changes the role of fire in the

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11. Lucretius, De Natura Rerum, Bk. V, ll. 772-836; Ovid, Metamorphoses, Bk. I, ll. 416-37.

life of the salamander both in the battle and in the reference to it in the love letter: In the first, it is an animal comprized of fire, so that heat meets, and does battle with, cold. In the letter, the lover, 'Amant salamandre', is, himself, consumed by his fiery nature.<sup>12</sup> The overtly alchemical association of the two mythological creatures is put to a new, non-alchemical use. The emblem serves to illustrate decoratively a trite theory, that the conflict between heat and cold is responsible for the maintenance of life; this is why, although the salamander would, at first glance, appear more fearsome, it is the stabilising force of the remora which wins the day.

In the description of the miraculous tree, formed of and by the sun-men, as in the depiction of the phoenix, there is play on the importance of colour. Visually, the components of the tree are identical in hue with the substances used and aspired after in the alchemist's art: red, white, emerald green, and gold; but, they are presented within a context typical of the baroque poet's, whose poetic conceits are, likewise, inherited from the Renaissance. The poet likens natural objects to precious metals and stones, and, to a

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12. A.M., p. 177; L., p. 209. On the nature of the salamander, see Jung, op.cit., p. 264, illustration, and p. 437, note; M. Praz, Studies in Seventeenth-century Imagery, Leipzig, 1939, p. 85, and p. 92, where Praz cites the description of Petrarch, which parallels the function of the phoenix: 'I feed on my death and live in the flames: a strange food and wondrous salamander' (Praz's translation).

certain extent, thereby 'concretizes' them; Cyrano goes a stage further, however: What, for a Théophile, a Saint-Amant, or, for that matter, a Marino, is metaphor, for Cyrano is a tangible 'fact'. The trunk of his tree is gold, the branches are silver, the fruits are not like precious jewels, they are carbuncles, chrysolite, amber. The flowers of the tree are diamonds, its buds, pearls, and its leaves, emeralds.<sup>13</sup>

The phoenix, clearly recognizable as a symbol of the alchemist, bedecked as it is with the crown that stands for the culmination of the 'work', also sports the colours associated with its various stages:

Sa queue paroisoit verte, son estomach  
d'azur émaillé, ses ailes incarnates, et  
sa teste de pourpre faisoit briller en  
s'agitant une couronne d'or, dont les  
rayons jaillissoient de ses yeux.<sup>14</sup>

Though it originated on earth, the phoenix explains to Dyrcona, it aspires after the sun. It enjoys the same wondrous nature as do the daemon of Socrates and the sun-inhabitants. All three try to explain their nature in terms that are comprehensible to man, for, in calling their feats miraculous, wondrous, marvellous, they are merely describing what, to them, is wholly natural. And so, the phoenix abandons his effort to have Dyrcona understand his habits and origin, for, he says,

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13. A.M., p. 138.

14. A.M., p. 147. On the colour symbols of the 'work' and its various stages, see S.K. de Rola, Alchemy, The Secret Art, London, 1973, pp. 10-12.

'Je voy bien que vous soupçonnez de fausseté ce que je vous viens d'apprendre'.<sup>15</sup> Is not the recourse to an emblem with alchemical connotations merely another way of attempting to depict the seemingly miraculous as natural?

Phoenix and sun-men's metamorphoses serve a similar narrative function: the sun men's feats are the introduction that Dyrcona has to the regions of the sun, upon his arrival on that star; the phoenix introduces Dyrcona to the Bird Kingdom. The narrative function of the daemon of Socrates was not completely dissimilar in the earlier journey through the moon kingdom, in that he had introduced Dyrcona to the customs of that land; overall, the daemon plays a larger role in the Lune, than sun-men and phoenix in the Soleil however; eventually, the character 'Campanella', takes over from sun-spot man, sun-men, phoenix and trees of Dodona, in guiding Dyrcona and acting as solarian exegetist, and he approximates the closest of the four sets of characters to the daemon. All of them possess the common function of exegetist, and all of them are superior mentally, in their sense-faculties, or, as sun-men and phoenix, in the force of their imagination and in their appearance to earth-men; thus, the alchemical or hermetic associations enjoyed by them serve a narrative rather than a purely philosophical function.

In his general belief that fire is the principle of life and the instigator of that mobility which witnesses to the

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15. A.M., p. 149.

existence of life in all things, Cyrano draws upon several philosophical traditions, from Antiquity to his immediate predecessors. If, like the alchemist, he is fascinated by the secret of life, and would wish to become cognizant of it, he could just as accurately be compared to the Stoic, in that he conceives of the world-soul as a fire; equally, like Cardano, Campanella and Vanino, he endorses Telesian sensationism and the attendant belief in the moulding power of heat and the staying power of radical cold, as we have just seen; to all this, he adds the Pomponazzian account of the body-soul relationship widespreadly adopted in the late sixteenth, and early seventeenth, centuries, and exemplified in Montaigne's essay on the subject, the theory of the force of the imagination. All these theories rely upon a single premiss, accepted over countless generations, that fire effects change of form. For Cyrano, such changes constitute also a change in substance - fire destroys to forge anew, to fashion and mould new beings out of old. It is precisely because, for Cyrano, there exists no spiritual reality, that fire takes on primordial importance.

Thus, diverse theories, disparate in origin, come together under the one heading of Heat. While it is envisaged essentially as a force, and thus would appear to a modern mind to be measurable and quantifiable, Cyrano's use of the notion derives in large measure from commonplaces exploited daily by the medical practitioners of his own and previous generations. Rooted in everyday observations, such as that youth is hot, old age, cold, that the choleric in disposition

are hot-tempered, the phlegmatic lacking in warmth, Cyrano's theories are the extension of what, to us, appear to be merely linguistic, or at most, visually deduced, niceties. In this, his thinking remains unscientific and dependent upon analogy, Yet, the concept of heat as an ubiquitous fashioning force is, nonetheless, central to Cyrano's thought, as we have already demonstrated in Chapter II above, and the force of his satire, as the conviction of its import, is determined very often by it. Thus, the fact that a sanguine disposition necessarily leads to acts of valour on the field of battle, while cowardice is but the expression of a cold human organism, is an integral part of the argument against warfare. That joy is a fire is accepted more or less as a fact; it is the theories of the universe which this helps to illustrate which assume the major importance.<sup>16</sup> What is peculiarly Cyranian here, is the way in which theories of disparate origins, serving very different ends in the narrative, are married in the single principle of the promethean properties of fire, this, in its turn, being used to exemplify a single moral vision of the world.

In the Letters, the same concept is exploited with a quite different purpose - that of humour; the literary conceits of the language of love being extravagantly played upon, thereby at once, emphasizing their banality and renewing them through the linguistic surprises afforded by the pointe. Love is so

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16. A.M., p. 56; p. 80; p.126.



ardent, so combustible, that it can burn down a house; like a forest in dry weather, Cyrano is so fired by his amorous feelings that he believes the least spark would set him alight. Even the tears of unrequited love do not safeguard the unfortunate sufferer:

Moy-mesme, contre moy, je vous prestois main-  
forte, et si le repentir d'un dessein si  
temeraire me forçoit d'en pleurer, je me  
persuadois que vous tiriez ces larmes de mon  
coeur, pour le rendre plus combustible, ayant  
osté l'eau d'une maison où vous vouliez  
mettre le feu.

Just as, in the Lune, the daemon extols the work of a Solarian who demonstrates the identity of opposites, so, here, Cyrano associates diametrically opposed elements, water and fire, and makes them coincide by taking literally the metaphor of fire for love: Fire takes on the same physical value as the tears which the lover sheds. Exactly the same conceit is sustained in the fifth love letter (1654 edition). His love spurned, Cyrano complains,

L'humidité des larmes que je répands, m'a  
tantost consommé. Mais consommé,  
croiriez-vous bien, Madame, de quelle  
façon? Je n'oserois plus marcher dans les  
rués embrasé comme je suis, que les enfans  
ne m'entourent de fusées, parce que je  
leur semble une figure eschapée d'un feu  
d'artifice, ny à la campagne qu'on ne me  
prenne pour un de ces Ardents qui traisnent  
à la riviere.<sup>17</sup>

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17. L., p.46, ll. 39-42; p. 231, ll. 18-24. The quotations are from L., p. 203; p. 209: the reference to 'ces Ardents' is to those who hunt witches, forcing them (the accused) to undergo the test of immersion in water.

Many of the constituents of the pointes of the Letters are the same as those used in the Autre Monde - the salamander, the zealot peasants, only too eager to put the suspected witch to the test (the birds subject their king to a similar fate, should he fail them), are but two examples; but their function is the opposite of that assumed by them in the novels. The concretization of linguistic clichés is the very condition of the formulation of a successful pointe in the Letters. That same process of concretizing is adopted in the Autre Monde in order to persuade the reader of the rightness of Cyrano's moral vision; thus, while here too, it is a means to an end, the end is non-linguistic, and non-literary. At the same time, though the means -/penetrative role of the fiery principle - appear to concern the physical universe, this is but the substratum, or premiss, upon which his socio-political and moral attitudes are built. Curiously, however, while the reader accepts those attitudes in the spirit in which they are couched, they are based upon a physical structure which owes far more to linguistic conceit than to physics. In this sense, the light-hearted humour of the idea of the loved-one's drowning in a sea of tears subsequent to a tiff with the beloved, which is taken literally by the young woman born in the Kingdom of Truth in the Soleil, is reminiscent of the verbal play of the Letters; though it is also a rare example of pure verbalism in the Autre Monde where the tone and style is normally less extravagant, and the 'factualizing' of accepted conceits without humorous import.<sup>18</sup>

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18. A.M., p. 197: 'Mais, hélas .... à bon port'.

The quasi-scientific theories expounded in the Autre Monde are not so far removed from the literary verbalism of the Letters as it might appear, and it is, perhaps, a measure of Cyrano's skill that he manages to persuade us that they are. This is exemplified in his use of the words 'fire' and 'heat'. The marrying of disparate source material works just because the reader is persuaded to accept an unstated premiss, that, in all contexts, one word, Heat, and the substance that causes it, fire, always has the same meaning. Once it is established that each individual soul consists in a fiery principle, and that a world-soul exists in all living creatures, then, when later the sun is described as the world-soul, it does not seem so extravagant a theory to posit a sun, the matter of which is comprized of the purified souls of the dead. Similarly, the conceits that pertain to the emotions can be afforded the same value as the explanation of those emotions by means of Cyrano's corpuscular theory of matter. All types of source material can be reduced to the same dimension just because the end purpose is moral rather than scientific. In how far Cyrano himself is aware of this process of assimilation of one type of subject, or even, of one type of thinking, to another, is unclear; for there is no correlation perceptible between subject-matter and the discipline it normally belongs to, and the seriousness of tone of the respective episodes in which it is made use of. It is the tone of each episode, or of the debate which forms it, which is the criterion of its value in the author's eyes, in his role of author.

In the light of this, it is the easier to attempt an elucidation of the role of alchemical ideas, and hermetic notions in general, in the Autre Monde: What they and Cyrano have in common is a common fund of symbols in the search after an apparently common goal, the discovery of the Secret of Life. But Cyrano's use of those symbols is different from that of the alchemist, and it is so just because the symbols exist: he builds upon them new connotations which rely upon the reader's knowledge of their alchemical associations. Nowhere does Cyrano show any evidence of an interest in alchemy for its own sake, and this for the very good reason that he leaves no place in his universe for that spiritual dimension which is the ultimate goal of the alchemist. The very use he puts alchemical notions to denies their original context; while the alchemist, like the hermetist and astrologer, seeks, by changes of form in substances, to perfect himself, and to attain to a knowledge of the One which is superior to, and different in nature from, those material changes which effect that achievement, Cyrano uses alchemical imagery to demonstrate that the apparently miraculous may be achieved naturally, (that is, that Nature is wondrous, and that all is always material). The alchemist assumed that material change could represent and symbolize spiritual change; Cyrano dispenses with the very aspect of the 'work' that distinguishes alchemist and chemist.

All the material that Cyrano culls from esoteric writers is similarly abstracted from its original context. Just as he ignores the specifically hermetic and astrological

significance of Campanella's Città del Sole and his De Sensu Rerum, just as the theory of the force of the imagination is alienated from the astrological and daemonic context in which it had been couched by Pomponazzi (though not by Montaigne), and just as he refers to Cardano, a renowned astrologer and occultist thinker, only in the playful reference at the beginning of the Lune, so his use of heliocentrism is non-hermetic, and that of alchemical data, non-alchemical. Though he remains very much a qualitative thinker, his aims are divorced from the occultist tendencies of the proponents of a Physics of Quality among his predecessors. The very different usage he puts such material to, associative and non-scientific, reveals the appeal of such data to him: he aims to depict the very secrets of existence; that depiction is a fictional one, which consists in asking the reader, just as the dramatist asks the spectator, to suspend his disbelief. Since alchemist and hermetist not only strive to attain to a knowledge of the secret of Life, but claim, by their hidden artifices, to have discovered it, the language and pictures of their arts are ideal for Cyrano's purpose.

If Cyrano tends to use the data and images of the qualitative rather than the quantitative thinker, and this despite his rejection of the spiritual, is this not precisely because of his continuous preoccupation with the life-spark? The quantitative scientist's enquiry into the nature of the universe must fail to attract him; it is unrecognizable to the

poet or creative writer as an enquiry into the nature of Life, for it consists in abstracting from Life, from the sensual data that impinge upon our emotional as well as our mental responses, a common denominator, mathematical laws, which are as far removed from the everyday notion of living, namely, of sensation and emotion, as is humanly possible. To state that his purpose in writing is moral rather than philosophical is to understand how it is that he can embrace the ideas of qualitative philosophers without being himself a full-blooded qualitative physicist, and how he can endorse much of the thought of the new philosophers whilst ignoring purposely all mathematical abstractions. It may well be no accident that he blithely describes Descartes's corpuscular theory of matter as that of an 'Epicurean',<sup>19</sup> nor that he couples together as kindred spirits Descartes and Campanella, when it is very possible that he knew of the disappointment in the latter of Descartes, Mersenne and Gassendi between the Calabrian's arrival in Paris, in 1634, and his death in 1639. This assimilation of Descartes to Epicurean atomism and to Campanellan allegiances, reflects exactly the same use of his material as that observed in his treatment of the theme of Heat, and in his embracing of the principle of the coincidence of contraries.

For Cyrann is no more reverent in using the ideas of the new philosophers than he has proved in using those of the Renaissance thinkers. Even his espousing of the new astronomy,

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19. A.M., p. 184.

so often referred to by those who perceive in his work a foretaste of the Enlightenment, is non-scientific, and is so to the point of inaccuracy. As Dr. Harth's study demonstrates clearly, the positing of the infinite plurality of worlds theory prepares the way for his anti-anthropocentrism. In at least two respects, he alters the base material, in the first, probably unwittingly, the error serving no didactic purpose, and, in the second, probably with a narrative function in mind: When Dyrcona travels to the moon he is not initially successful and lands instead in Canada, thus demonstrating that the earth must move from east to west; when he travels to the sun via the sunspot, he still concludes that the earth turns in this direction, yet, in listing the countries that he had perceived passing by under him, he has it turn in the opposite direction. Madeleine Alcover points out that the same directional error is to be found in Godwin's Man in the Moone, so that Cyrano may well have copied it from that source.<sup>20</sup> This notwithstanding, the fact that he can make such a mistake shows that it is not the theory itself that interests him most; it serves rather as local colour, as well as the basis of a new, non-authoritarian, non-traditional way of conceiving of the world.

Secondly, when the sun is described as a sphere with

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20. A.M., p. 11; p.127. See M. Alcover, La Pensée philosophique et scientifique de Cyrano de Bergerac, Paris, 1970, pp. 100-1.

no centre of gravity, there is no scientific justification for distinguishing between this globe and all the others in our world system. As we suggested in the previous chapter, however, this physical distinction does imply a distinction in kind between this and all other worlds; also, it tallies with the equation of sun and world-soul, in that the weightlessness of the sun would marry with the idea that it is formed of the purified matter of earthly souls, Cyrano, throughout the Autre Monde, lending to more perfect realms than Earth a less dense, less material body, and doing so despite having discarded the spiritual.<sup>21</sup>

Cyrano can be equally inaccurate in his use of the longer established esoteric arts. Thus, for instance, the dew encapsulated in the phials around Dyrcona's body during his first flying experience, elevate him and move him upwards towards the sun, the rays of which attract it. Sherwood Taylor discusses the significance of dew for the alchemist; he writes: 'The celestial influence can be shown as dew descending, for dew was often identical with this heavenly influence.' Critics have explained this ascent of Dyrcona in terms of rarefaction, but Cyrano does not specify why the heat of the sun attracts the dew; the phenomenon might just as reasonably be the result of an inaccurate alchemical

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21. See above pp. 417-18, and A.M., p. 137; p. 182.



reminiscence.<sup>22</sup>

Again, critics have discussed whether or not Cyrano intended the reader to infer pansychist leanings in him, or whether his proposition that the universe be 'represented' as an immense animal was meant purely as an analogy. As has already been shown in the final section of Chapter II above,<sup>23</sup> the representational aspect of the introduction to the cironalité universelle episode is no less nor greater than that evident in most of the theories propounded in the Autre Monde. The attempt to make such a distinction would probably have seemed quite inappropriate to Cyrano: There are few, if any, purely scientific discourses in the two novels, just as there are no purely descriptive passages; even the description of Dyrcona's entry into terrestrial paradise serves to prepare the reader for the wondrous nature of the realm which it introduces to us. Cyrano's prolific use of analogy built upon analogy translates his vision of an universe in which all, however multifarious and complex, describes one reality:

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22. A.M., p. 9. Quotation from F. Sherwood Taylor, The Alchemists, London, 1951, p.149 (illustr., p.151). P. Toldo suggests the explanation of rarefaction in his 'Les Voyages merveilleux de Cyrano de Bergerac' (Revue des Etudes Rabelaisiennes, vol. IV (1906), p. 303. Yet another favourite explanation is the analogy with a phenomenon recounted in 1616, by Jacques de Fontenay, in his L'Oeuf de Pagues: An empty egg, filled with dew, resealed and exposed to sunlight, had jumped about to the point of being momentarily suspended in mid-air (See J-J. Bridenne, 'Cyrano de Bergerac et la science aéronautique' in Revue des Sciences humaines, 1954, p.248, repeated by M. Alcover, op.cit., p. 24).

23. See above, pp. 174-8. This particular instance of 'representation' is discussed by M. Alcover, op.cit. pp. 58-9.

it is at once a diversifying and a unifying principle, so that, just as in the Letters, so also in the Autre Monde, figurative language very often provides the backbone of the argument, without which it would fail to exist, let alone to convince.

This use of what is basically metaphor has wider ramifications in the literary phenomenon generally termed 'baroque', while the function of language in philosophy during the period similarly named helps one to understand the difficulties of communication which Cyrano, in common with his contemporaries, inherits from forbears persuaded of a very different picture of the universe. In the section which follows I shall attempt to situate Cyrano's imaginative world in the world of the baroque, so adequately depicted by critics like Jean Rousset and F. J. Warnke.

That fascination with appearance and reality so evident in European literature in the later decades of the sixteenth century and well into the seventeenth, is generally acknowledged to be the main feature of what has been termed from the nineteenth century on, by analogy with architecture, the 'Baroque'.<sup>24</sup> Whereas, in the case of the English Metaphysical poets, the theme stems from a concern with the link between the material, temporal life and the transcendental, spiritual verity, with the French poet and playwright, the emphasis is

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24. For a brief history of the use of the term, see J.V. Mirollo, The Poet of the Marvelous: Giambattista Marino, New York, 1963, ch. 15.

placed rather upon the discrepancy between outer show and reality, between how things appear and what they are. The mirror, itself the very condition of trompe l'oeil and a favourite object of comparison for the baroque poet, symbolizes the deceptive nature of things: always the ('true' portrait of the object reflected, it yet distorts according to the angle at which it is placed, and this distortion can reach the point of a deception tantamount to untruth.

Just as the postulation of the Copernican universe had turned upside down the orthodox cosmos, and just as the Brunonian, and subsequent Galilean, one had made all physical truths relative, so for the literary artist, nothing is static and nothing quite as it seems. F. J. Warnke suggests a direct influence between these challenges to the old astronomy and the world portrayed by the poet, man's loss of a central place in the cosmos being reflected in the unexpected and conflicting angles of vision adopted, often simultaneously, by the writer. For him, 'the experience of contradiction, whether sensuously or intellectually presented, is the major form assumed by the Baroque concern with appearance and reality'.<sup>25</sup> As against this, the poet creates his own universe of paradox, a universe in which, by the application of a purely verbal logic, all becomes possible, and this at the expense of the logic of philosophical concept or generally accepted everyday

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25. Versions of Baroque: European Literature in the Seventeenth Century, New Haven, Conn. 1972, p. 62.

fact: The conchetto, acutezza, and pointe, and the notion of ingegno, all typifying the poetry of the period, rely upon the writer's ability to perceive the incongruous and the paradoxical, whether in objects and concepts, or in the very language itself. In its extreme metaphorical form, as evidenced in the work of a Marino, for instance, the language takes over, sometimes distorting the validity and relationship of objects as generally conceived, to the point of recreating reality; the imaginary world thus fashioned is at once irrational, and, linguistically, rational.<sup>26</sup>

In the theatre, a quite comparable love of playing with appearance is to be witnessed. Characters assume disguise upon disguise, donning guise upon guise to the point of no longer being able to distinguish their 'real' from their assumed person. Both produced in 1636, Rotrou's Les Sosies and Corneille's L'illusion comique present exactly the same dilemma as do the architect or the non-dramatic poet of the period: The confrontation of Sosie with his double, and of Amphitryon with his, is a 'reality' understood by the audience, but which is simultaneously lived and dreamed by the characters; it is the exact parallel of the trompe l'oeil effect, and of the discordance which the poet can achieve by a play on

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26. On the nature of these figures of speech, see Mirolo, op.cit., pp. 116-7 and 120; J. Goldin, Cyrano de Bergerac et l'art de la pointe, Montreal, 1973, pp. 18-19, 26-30, and 185-97. On the 'logic' of the baroque writer's use of language, see Warnke, op.cit., ch.3, pp.52-65: 'The Experience of Contradiction'.

linguistic conceits at the expense of everyday logic.<sup>27</sup>

Corneille goes a stage further, for in his comedy, the audience is no more certain of the reality behind appearances than are the characters: the play is a series of metamorphoses, each one either seeming to be true or to flout the laws of mortal existence; yet, within the terms of the play itself, there is no more reason for the audience to believe the events of the final scene, when, it is told, it has been the witness of a play within a play, than the dual vision, earlier in Act V, of the main characters living out their marriage like any disabused couple, while yet playing the role of royal personages, or than the supernatural setting of the play as a whole, where a father, through the powers of a magician, can watch his absent son. Ultimately, the spectator has to admit that no part of the play is any more 'real' than any other, and that, at those moments when the story appeared most plausible, in terms of the story it was least so. Thus, just as is the case with a much adorned, French baroque arch, the ornamentation of which obscures rather than reveals its basic, functional, structure, so, in this play, and in the literature of the period in general (according to Rousset), appearances deceive.

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27. Rotrou plays on the idea of dreaming and waking throughout his play, even to the point of lending to the deceiver - Mercury - the doubts of the deceived: See Les Sosies, ed. F. Hémon, in Rotrou, Théâtre choisi, Paris, 1925, p.95 (I, iii): 'Dois-je croire mes sens? Veillé-je, ou si je songe?'; cf. p. 104 (II, iii):  
Sosie. 'Elle [Alcmène] dort; laissons-la, nous troublons son repos: / Peut-elle sans rêver nous tenir ces propos?'  
Alcmène [to Amphytrion].  
 'Non, non, je vous entends, je discours et je veille: Veillant, je vous ai vus'.  
 (Cf. also, Act II, sc. i, bottom of p. 101, where Sosie had made out his own case to Amphytrion in precisely the same terms).

In all his work on French baroque literature, Jean Rousset adheres to the categories he established in his initial study of La Littérature de l'âge baroque en France of 1954, and which are symbolized by Circe and the peacock: the two features of baroque literature, as of its architecture, are metamorphosis (or change, and movement), and ostentation (as in the case of the peacock's attractions, this is manifestly of a visual nature). The poet's interest in appearance and reality is revealed in his preoccupation with movement and with the change of aspect or form of natural objects, such as the movement of trees in the wind or of clouds in the sky, as the changing hue of the sky itself, or the multifarious aspects of sea and land in the sunlight. The dual aspect of water, ever-moving, yet, by virtue of its transparency, often appearing still, makes it a favourite subject; its mirroring quality lends to it a central place in the poet's concept of Nature, whether it be found in a natural or man-made setting. The plastic attraction of the natural is most often to be found in the artificially fashioned adornments with which the poet metaphorically describes it: minerals and precious stones which man prizes and shapes into jewels; gold, silver, crystal, amber, chrysolite, and emerald, at once depict and embellish. The poet tends, through his descriptive tools, to lend solidity to what he describes, yet, all the while, attempting to catch the fleeting instant of transformation. A poem such as Saint-Amant's L'Hiver des Alpes, itself closely modelled on a

poem of Marino,<sup>28</sup> illustrates this dual effect.

Exactly parallel with this view of man's surroundings is the depiction of man himself. Interest centres on the most radical change of form that he undergoes, namely, from life to death, and on the most crucial and fleeting moment in that process, the moribund. That other crucial moment - birth - is likened, and thus, subordinated, to the passage from life to death, perhaps because the latter stage is more clear-cut (does birth begin at conception or upon the emergence of the baby?), and because, for the individual undergoing it, death is more significant, and certainly more dramatic, since, unlike the newly-born baby, the dying man is fully conscious of himself and of the world around him.

Death is envisaged as an event, but as an event which represents a stage in existence; it becomes a constructive rather than an impoverishing experience in many of the poems about it: Often the poet contemplates his own corpse, imagining his future death as though he will be there watching, conscious in his unconsciousness. The detailed accuracy of these poets' descriptions of the physical signs of death seems to be a means not only to familiarize themselves and the reader with that state, but also to capture and possess it whilst alive. Thus, it becomes an integral part of living. Living, the poet vicariously feels his own death, so that, in a sense, his flight of imagination enables him to escape and to accept it. Gody's poem beginning 'La nuict m'emplit de deuil' exemplifies this;

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28. See Mirolo, op.cit., p. 253.

he explains that it 'pleases' him to imagine his 'passage' into death, his appearance, his feelings, his last words, 'comme l'on s'en viendra tout autour de mon lict/ Voir s'esteindre ma vie'. He delights in the spectacle of his corpse, believing that to lament his mortality is healthier than not to do so; it would seem to be the very condition of living at all. By a swift change from imagined future back to the present, Gody also manages to suggest the idea of life in death:

Je me figure ainsi l'heure de cét abord [de la mort],  
 Qui galoppe sans cesse.  
 Helas! comment vivrois-je en ces ombres de mort,  
 Sans dueil et sans tristesse.<sup>29</sup>

Just as the Epicurean morality, with its debunking of the gods, removes the fear of dying, so the playing on the death-in-life theme tends to attract the opposite notion of life-in-death: Thus, for instance, Le Moyne, depicts the battlefield after battle,

Où la vie, et la mort par un accord farouche,  
 Sont jointes corps à corps, et bouche contre bouche.  
 .....  
 Et par un artifice horrible à la nature,  
 Un vivant sur un mort est mis à la torture;  
 Est contraint d'attirer avec l'air son tourment;  
 D'apprendre avant le temps, à pourrir lentement;  
 D'embrasser son supplice, et d'une étrange sorte,  
 De respirer la mort par une bouche morte.<sup>30</sup>

It is the lifelike aspect of death, in short, upon which all

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29. Anthologie de la poésie baroque française, ed. J. Rousset, Paris, 1961, vol. II, p. 160.

30. Ibid., II, p.151.



these writers dwell: Just as the wind or the sun alters the appearance of natural objects, so death alters a man. Man, like the universe, is constantly changing: born, he is dying, dying, he is moving from one aspect of existence to another.<sup>31</sup> Seen in this wider context, the popularity of Seneca's chorus on the theme of death's being as pre-life, to be found in his Troades, is most understandable.

If Cyrano concentrates upon Nature's flux rather than upon the individual's or man's fortune, this does not mean that he views the human condition differently from his contemporaries. On the contrary, his vision is essentially the same as that of, say, a Théophile, a Saint-Amant, or a Tristan, but his end being satirical rather than purely pictorial, he uses his material differently. They bring together man and his environment through the human being's feelings, most often those of love, but Cyrano seeks to incorporate man fully into the natural whole, as an integral part of it. They tend to describe nature in human terms, as through the human evaluation of minerals, metals, and stones, that is, in the selection of gold, silver, jewels (as the most prized,); Cyrano tends to describe man in terms of Nature, evaluating him through

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31. Cf. J. Rousset, La Littérature de l'âge baroque en France, Paris, 1954, p. 230: 'Dans ce monde comparable à une vaste scène tournante, tout devient spectacle, y compris la mort, qui obsède les imaginations au point que l'homme s'en joue à lui-même le scénario, se regardant mort, ou plutôt mourant; car c'est le mouvement et le passage qui le séduit en premier lieu, et la mort elle-même se présente à lui en mouvement.'

the eyes of other species. As we have already suggested when appraising Cyrano's physics, however,<sup>32</sup> his very predilection for fire, as for an atomic account of living matter, reflects his fascination with movement and change, finding typically baroque expression in the later episode of the sun-inhabitants' metamorphoses. Likewise, the 'all in all' theories of matter of Gonzales and the belief in the force of the imagination evident throughout the Autre Monde find themselves expressed in the episode of the arbres amants in a manner, and with source material, typifying the companion fashion of his day - for Ovid's Metamorphoses.

There exist some twenty-five editions of the Metamorphoses, translated into French, in the Bibliothèque nationale, and yet eleven more again in the British Museum, for the period 1532 to 1661. Certainly, if the Medieval writer was attracted to the Art of Love, the Renaissance and seventeenth-century Frenchman's predilection was for the mythological work. Of the French translations which were printed (there existed also, of course, editions in the vernacular), the most frequently reedited is that of Renouard; different editions sporting fresh engravings to accompany the text. There is a marked falling off of interest, to judge from the lack of prolificity of editions from that date on, from around 1660-65.

About the same time that Cyrano was probably writing the Soleil, the Metamorphoses were the subject of burlesque: In 1649, Louis Richer's Ovide bouffon was published in Paris, in four books; this edition was republished in 1650 and 1651. In 1662, it was printed together with a fifth book added. This work treated of the whole of the original Latin work, but Dassoucy's L'Ovide en belle humeur, published in 1650, consists in a burlesque only of the main stories in Part I of the Metamorphoses. The work is preceded by Dedicatory

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32. See above, ch. II, p. 156.

poems of Corneille, De Chavannes, Tristan L'Hermite, and of Cyrano, (still, presumably, on good terms with Dassoucy), plus one of Lebret. Also reminiscent of Ovid's work, Dassoucy's musical comedy, Les Amours d'Apollon et de Daphné, was composed around the year 1647.<sup>33</sup> Clearly, the appeal of the Metamorphoses coincides with the preponderance of those attitudes and literary styles which we have called baroque. What, then, was the nature of that appeal? An examination of the presentation of the stories in seventeenth-century editions of the work, and, in particular, of the choice and style of the engravings illustrating them, should help us to find an answer, and also, will serve as a framework for the consideration of Cyrano's use of Ovidian material which follows.

It is hardly surprising that the Metamorphoses should appeal, depicting as they do the history of the world from Creation to the age of Greek and Roman mythology, through divers, apparently miraculous and marvellous happenings which, nevertheless, illustrate a single truth, namely the force of emotion. The violence and extraordinary nature of the passions to which the heroes of Antiquity are prey, are matched by the dreadful, yet wondrous, transformations which those passions effect. It is the moment of change of physical aspect that the engraver delights in depicting, just as the literary artist tries to portray the less eventful, and altogether natural, metamorphoses that Nature undergoes from moment to moment, or from season to season. The appropriateness of this Latin work is evidenced in Rousset's introduction to his

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33. A propos the date of composition of Dassoucy's play, see Yves Giraud's Introduction in his edition of it (Geneva, 1969) pp. 17-18. It was published in 1650.

anthology of French baroque poetry:

Quand le fond d'une expérience intérieure est l'intuition de l'inconstance et de la variation, l'artiste est enclin à tout traduire en termes de métamorphose, il se porte d'instinct vers ce qui la confirme et l'exprime: dans l'histoire humaine, la naissance et la fin du monde, le chaos originel et la résurrection des corps; dans la vie spirituelle, le miracle ou la conversion ...; dans la nature, les commencements ....; ce seront enfin les métamorphoses proprement dites, pour lesquelles on puise à pleines mains dans le toujours jeune réservoir d'Ovide, en insistant de préférence sur l'acte même de la mutation ....; ou bien .... les satyriques se prêteront aux libres extravagances d'une rêverie où tout semble possible.<sup>34</sup>

In a 1619 edition consulted (a copy of Renouard's translation, published in Paris by L'Angelier, and illustrated by a number of engravers), all the artists have attempted to depict metamorphosis by drawing the hero at the stage of being half one creature, half another; though, it must be admitted that they all fail to transmit the feeling of movement in the style of their drawing. Of the subjects chosen, the transformation into trees is a favourite: heads sprout leaves, hands are already becoming leafy, and arms have taken on the attitude of branches. While keeping their human contours, the subjects' torsoes are already unmistakably tree-trunks, and their legs and feet, roots.

In another edition of the Renouard text, namely, that published in 1650 by the Parisians Nicolas and Jean de la Coste,

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34. Op.cit., I, pp. 13-14.

the engravers adopt a somewhat different technique to suggest change of form: Here, each engraving consists in a series of vignettes, usually showing the various stages of transition of the subjects of the story chosen for depiction.<sup>35</sup> Again, a favourite choice of the artist is of stories dealing with transformation into trees; transformation into birds are also a frequent choice.

The frequent portrayal of arboreal metamorphoses reflect the popularity of the Daphne fable in literature and art alike.<sup>36</sup> The spirit of the myth is most beautifully captured in the Italian sculpture of Bernini, commissioned by Cardinal Borghese and effected in the 1620s, where a youthful Apollo chases an equally youthful Daphne who, though hampered by the bark around her legs, and with hands and tresses changed into leaves, expresses movement from whichever angle she is viewed.<sup>37</sup> Though the engravers of the French

35. There are instances of a set of vignettes on one story containing characters from other stories; no explanation for this is given, nor easily deducible. E.g., opposite pl 147: The story of Pyramus and Thisbe includes a drawing of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis in embrace; cf. opposite p. 421: The main story illustrated is that of Orpheus and Eurydice, but also features Pygmalion with his statue, and Cinyras and Myrrha.

36. See Yves Giraud, La Fable de Daphné, Geneva, 1968, for an extensive treatment of the subject.

37. This personal impression is substantiated by specialists of baroque art: See Michael Kitson, The Age of Baroque, London, 1966, p.43, where he compares this sculpture with Rubens's style, writing, 'Rubens was the creator of another characteristic of baroque movement: the tendency for forms to blend and merge into one another ....

editions of the Metamorphoses fall immeasurably short of Bernini's achievement, their intentions would seem very similar. Whether the human being is half tree, half beast, or half petrified, the attraction of the myth lies in the idea of change. The arboreal theme is most successfully portrayed aesthetically.

The emphasis on the basic notion of change is made in the index of the 1650 edition mentioned, witnessing at least to the publisher's understanding of the work. There are some thirty-five titles all drawn up in terms of the characters' metamorphic activity, such as, for instance, 'Adonis fils de Myrrha, desia changé en arbre', 'Cenée devenue homme qui ne pouvoit estre blessé, fut changé en oyseau', 'Hermaphrodite et Salmacis deviennent un mesme corps'. In addition, there are three general headings which express the overall theme of change of form, but also suggest that this involves a change of substance: they are, 'Ames changent d'un corps en un autre selon l'opinion de Pythagore'; 'Elemens se changent sans cesse les uns avec les autres'; 'Mutations diverses de toutes choses'.

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37/Cont....

The relationship of forms is like the sequential arrangement of images in Milton's poetry. One can hardly dwell on each in isolation, but must take them as part of a continually moving whole. .... [In Bernini's figures] there is the same thread of energy running right through the figures and the same power of conceiving it in three dimensions. The result is ... dynamic, not static, and the forms flow organically into each other'. Cf. V-L. Tapié, The Age of Grandeur, London, 1960, p.42: 'Hardly ever has the problem of movement been so happily solved in sculpture. The metamorphosis of the nymph seems to be taking place in front of our eyes'.

Such is the popularity of Ovid's Metamorphoses, and of the idea of metamorphosis in general, that one is not surprised to see uses of them which appear to have little connection with the original form or intent. Thus, for example, in a new translation of the Ovid by Du Ryer, first published in 1655, but consulted by me in a 1660 edition, synopses of the stories are accompanied by didactic explanations transferring the events onto the plane of everyday conduct. So, in summarizing the tale of Pygmalion and the statue, Du Ryer remarks that Pygmalion's love illustrates that many women are as cold and as rigid as stone. This single instance shows well enough that the significance of the stories is seen in quite different terms from those envisaged by Ovid, or suggested by the engravings of earlier Renouard editions. The popularity of the theme of metamorphosis is to be seen in a rather differently styled amorous context in the works of salon writers, where the lady is represented by her admirer as a living creature or object, the qualities of which correspond to her own. Such, for example, is Voiture's Métamorphose de Julie en diamant of 1641. There is little difference in treatment here, however, from say, the Guirlande de Julie, where Mlle d'Angennes is praised by various frequenters of her mother's salon who write as one flower after another forming together an imaginary garland, or from say, Voiture's Lettre de la Carpe au Brochet. In all three, we are being offered extended metaphor rather than metamorphosis as understood in Ovid's work, or in the visual artistic portrayals of it contemporaneous with these writings of the frequenters of the Chambre bleue.

Even so summary a perusal of the fortunes of the Metamorphoses shows that there is much in the seventeenth-century French and Italian understanding of the work to attract an author like Cyrano, and that he is typical of his generation in drawing on it. Indeed, he exploits the elements seized upon by contemporary translators and engravers of the Latin original both in the Autre Monde as a whole, and in his use of the Ovidian source in his story of the Arbres amants.<sup>38</sup> In this story, at one and the same time, Cyrano places Ovidian material in a setting other than that of the original, and abides by the main incidents in each tale; in this way, he emphasizes the import of the original - the power of love, while incorporating the material selected into his own vision of the universe, which it is the central purpose of that material to illustrate. Surprisingly, given the proximity of Ovid's conception of man and Cyrano's morality, this is the only episode in the Autre Monde in which the main elements are taken from the Metamorphoses, and in which the borrowing appears to be direct. (When the sun-king is explaining how his subjects manage to change from tree into handsome youth, he cites the feats of the Ovidian characters Cippus and Gallus Vitius, as well as of Codrus - a non-Ovidian example. All are capable of extraordinary transformations owing to the force of their imagination. It seems likely that Cyrano was drawing here upon Montaigne, rather than directly upon Ovid, however: while Codrus does not feature in Montaigne either, Cippus and Gallus

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38. A.M., pp. 168-76.



Vitius, as well as Croesus, later referred to by Cyrano's phoenix in a similar context, are all examples utilized by Montaigne in his essay on 'La Force de l'imagination'.<sup>39</sup>

This episode has been universally ignored by critics. Even Madeleine Alcover, whose method would seem to require attention to every episode, and especially one lengthy in terms of the Soleil as a whole, and, therefore, presumably of some importance to its author, dismisses it as nothing more than 'une jolie fable' which, she says, 'il ne faut pas prendre au sérieux'; she makes a distinction between the story of the sexual exploits of those who partake of the fruits of Pylades and Orestes and the second half of the episode, where Cyrano explains the workings of the magnet and the function of the Poles.<sup>40</sup> As I shall hope to show, far from being gratuitous, the first part of the story is integrally, if intricately, linked to the second. Two editors, at least, of popular

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39. A.M., p. 146; p.148. Cf. Montaigne, Essais, Paris, 1950 (Pléiade ed.), pp. 123-4. Cyrano lends Codrus powers similar to the daemon's (to be rejuvenated). He ignores his traditional reputation (self-sacrifice on the field of battle), which would have made him an example more fitting in the arbres amants episode (cf. Plato, Symposium, trans. W. Hamilton, <sup>Harvard</sup> ~~Penguin~~ Bks.,) 1951, p.90, where he is mentioned together with Achilles and Patroclus - characters who figure in Cyrano's story of Pylades and Orestes).

40. See M. Alcover, op. cit., pp. 126-7.

editions of the Autre Monde have omitted the episode.<sup>41</sup> This tacit disparagement may well be due to the abstruse nature of various parts of the narrative, including, in my opinion, Cyrano's account of the Poles. Almost pure allegory, Cyrano makes no attempt to explain the significance of his symbols. This notwithstanding, I feel the episode deserves attention, and that it is much more revealing of Cyrano's vision of the universe, as of his narrative technique, than critics have hitherto allowed; for, it is in this story that Cyrano manages to bring together into a cohesive whole his physics and his morality. By linguistic and allegorical analogy, he creates an internal link between the two, binding together all the main themes and the satirical import of the Autre Monde. If not, to our minds, wholly successful as a piece of descriptive writing, the passage is something of a tour de force.

Recounted by one of the oracular oaks of Dodona, the story of the arbres amants has as its main characters the Greek princes, Pylades and Orestes, who, according to Cyrano, died on the battlefield in what appears to be Homeric fashion: Pylades having been mortally wounded in the midst of his enemies, Orestes, seeking out his friend, dies of grief over Pylades's body. Out of their rotting corpses grow two apple trees, intertwined, the fruits of the one engendering in the

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41. The editions of H. Weber, Paris, 1959, and of Willy de Spens, Paris, 1963 (the second, published under the title, Voyage dans la Lune et Histoire comique des Etats et Empires du Soleil).

consumer of them a lasting and deep love of the consumer of the fruits of the other. Thus, Greek heroes like Hercules and Theseus, Achilles and Patroclus, and the Trojans Nisus and Euryalis, all having eaten of the fruits of the respective trees, love each other with a passion as beautiful and as good as the apples that caused it. As against these noble, if wholly male, passions, however, the six Ovidian examples which follow of love bonds similarly caused are admitted to have been 'criminal'. The examples would seem to be carefully selected to instance the full range of passionate ties regarded by society as preternatural: Myrrha's love for her father exemplifies incest, Pasiphaë's predeliction for a bull, bestiality, Pygmalion's for the statue of his own making, love of an object, self-created. At Cyrano's hand, the yearning of Iphis for Ianthe is illustrative of change of sex by dint of its desiring. Self-love is exemplified by the most pronounced case of it, Narcissus (and Echo), as is bisexuality through the time-honoured example of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis. To this very adequate list, Cyrano adds a last instance culled from a quite disparate source, for it has to do with a character taken from Persian history, Artaxerxes. Cyrano could have known of the character through Plutarch's Lives, though it is more likely that Jean Magnon's tragedy, Artaxerxe, first published in 1645, suggested the subject to him. Be that as it may, Cyrano takes only the name from history, putting his Persian prince into an Ovidian-type situation, which, thus, brings full circle the main story of the dispersion of the essence - or life-spark - of Pylades and Orestes.

Whereas all the characters so far had gone in pairs,

each partaking of one of the two heroes' essences, Artaxerxes, himself imbued at conception with the essence of Orestes as a result of his father's having eaten, at his nuptial feast, an apple from that tree, falls in love with a plane tree to which his father had grafted a branch of the very same Oresteian tree that had provided the nuptial apples. Eventually dying in the arms of his beloved, Artaxerxes is cremated upon a funeral pile comprized of that object of his affection; the fire, 'pure and subtle', rises to the sun, where another tree of Orestes is formed out of their consumed matter. The original, entwined, trees of Pylades and Orestes had grown out of the earth into which their corpses had rotted; the solar Oresteian tree, out of the essence of corpses purified by fire. Thus, the circulation of the life-spark of the two warriors is never-ending.

From this summary of the first half of the episode, it can be seen that, while using Ovidian material, Cyrano puts it into a somewhat different context from the original. Conversely, legend, myth, and history of disparate origins, Greek, Roman, and Persian, are married and then endowed with the complexion and import of one Roman's notion of life (Ovid's), as coloured by Cyrano's contemporaries' understanding of his work. Thus, it is the arboreal metamorphosis to which all other types are assimilated; in the same way, true to contemporary reading of the Metamorphoses, the acute and subtle psychological studies made by Ovid are ignored by Cyrano. Though the main details of the Ovidian tales are respected, it is not these as such that interest Cyrano, but rather, it would appear, the possi-

bilities which the tales offer to illustrate the dynamism and irrepressible force of love. Though the examples chosen do span the range of preternatural ties, and though Cyrano makes it clear that those ties are both criminal and unnatural, it is not these aspects which make up the main point of the story. As in the case of the daemon, of the phoenix, or of the sun-inhabitants, the extraordinary, wondrous, and apparently unnatural nature of the ties provides Cyrano's means of stressing their importance. As in those other cases, it is the force of desiring, itself a wholly natural impetus, which accounts for strange phenomena.

This interpretation is borne out by a satirical sally interpolated between the first and second half of the episode. The Oresteian tree on the sun, explains the oak of Dodana, is now the only surviving offspring of the original entwined trees; on earth none has remained, for,

Les pères et les mères qui, comme vous sçavez,  
au gouvernement de leurs familles ne se laissent  
conduire que par l'intérêt, fâchez que leurs  
enfans, aussitost qu'ils avoient gousté de ces  
pommes, prodiguoient à leur amy tout ce qu'ils  
possédoient, brûlèrent autant de ces plantes  
qu'ils en purent découvrir. Ainsi l'espèce  
estant perdue, c'est pour cela qu'on ne trouve  
plus aucun amy véritable.<sup>42</sup>

If sexual love is so powerful a force as to upset the normal order of things, love of any kind is, notwithstanding, a laudable pursuit; the very manifestation of life, it cannot and should not be curbed. Just as parents are criticized in the Lune for

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42. A.M., p. 174.

their unthinking prejudices, just as chastity is there a crime, and just as, in the bird kingdom, it is man who is indicted for his unloving treatment of other species, so here, it is parents who, as the arbiters and safeguarders of artificially-fashioned social laws, destroy the trees, not so much because they object to the type of love engendered in their offspring, as because of the generosity (strength) of that love. The young lovers act spontaneously, their parents, through vested interest. And so, just as all that is natural is good, evil being a social rather than an instinctively held concept, so all forms of love are valid, and, in this, worth-while, expressions of it; the more exceptional the form it takes, the more telling the proof of its force.

It is only when we have read the second half of the episode, however, that the first falls into place. Dependent upon it in terms of the story, the last part of the narrative constitutes a repeat version of the first structurally. Out of the calcified, rain-moistened ashes of the Pyladean and Oresteian essenced trees, burned down by furious and destructive parents, were formed two hitherto unknown forms of matter, namely, the magnet and iron. The attraction of the one to the other is assured by the sap of the two types of trees which exists, distinctly, in them. That they are both attracted together towards the Poles, Cyrano explains still in terms of the main story, if somewhat abstrusely: he assumes that the souls of the original lovers tend towards the pole, where each may join with the other; likewise, the magnet and iron, formed of the same matter, will aspire after the same resting place. The Poles,

surmises Cyrano, are the clearing houses for the fiery matter that circulates around the universe; without their aid, the sun, continuously emitting its surface particles, would become extinct. Now we see that the original main story, apparently a gratuitous piece of imaginative embroidery, not only links up in every detail with the physical explanation of the fiery world-soul in the last part of the episode, but has served as an allegory illustrating that last part. In my opinion, the second half of the narrative, starting with the explanation of the behaviour of the magnet, is, itself, an allegory, so that we have one allegory superimposed on a second, companion allegory, each integrally linked with the other in terms of the story as a whole. For all the strands of the story, however disparate in origin, demonstrate the equivalence in Cyrano's scheme of things of fire, love, and life. In other words, what the episode illustrates above all is Cyrano's moral values. That this is so will become clearer if we examine, in a little more detail, the elements of this story in terms of theories to be found elsewhere in the Autre Monde and if we take into account the manner in which Cyrano describes the behaviour of the magnet.

Both in the complexity of the allegory, and in the manner of its telling, one is reminded of the earlier episode, in the Lune, where Gonzales expatiates upon his 'all in all' theory of matter. In both, the movement of matter is perpetually circular, in the sense that all things become all things in the first episode, and in the sense that all things are imbued with

one and the same life-force, in the later solar one. In the arbres amants episode, Cyrano explains love and life in terms of sympathy, whether it be the sympathy of male for male, female for female, one sex for the opposite one, or even man for inanimate object. The magnet, that object which epitomizes the whole idea of sympathy and antipathy, is referred to at least three times in the Lune, in similar contexts to those alluded to here, and, clearly, fascinates Cyrano.<sup>43</sup> Unlike the exposition in the Gonzales episode, he does not use here explicitly the idea of antipathy, as an explanation of life, or movement, though he states that it is Nature herself who retained the distinction between the essences of the two heroes.<sup>44</sup> For here, he insists upon all those aspects of its behaviour which may be compared with love.

We perceive exactly the same type of linguistic usage here as in those analogies drawing upon the notion of heat which we looked at in the previous section of this chapter, and I think that the obvious paralleling of the build-up story of the entwined, amorous trees, in the amorous terminology employed in describing the magnet, has more significance than a merely

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43. A.M., p. 23; pp. 26-7; p.37. In the first example, Eve's sympathy for Adam's body is compared to 'l'aiman [qui] se tourne au septentrion d'où il a esté arraché; in the second, Elias describes his iron chariot, caused to move upwards by his tossing a magnet into the air, to which the iron was attracted; in the third, the daemon explains, 'moy, ... je conçois par mes sens la cause de la sympathie de l'aiman avec le pôle'. All three ideas are clearly repeated in the arbres amants episode.

44. A.M., p. 170: 'La Nature pourtant avoit distingué l'énergie de leur double essence avec tant de précaution ...'.



formal one, or than simply a gratuitously libertin one of diversion for its own sake. Cyrano writes:

Vous voyez l'Aimant se couvrir en un tournemain de ces atomes métalliques; et l'amoureuse ardeur avec laquelle ils s'accrochent est si subite et si impatiente qu'après s'estre embrassez par tout, vous diriez qu'il n'y a pas un grain de Fer qui ne veuille s'unir avec un grain d'Aimant; car le Fer ou l'Aimant séparez envoient continuellement de leur masse les petits corps les plus mobiles à la queste de ce qu'ils aiment: mais quand ils l'ont trouvé, n'ayant plus rien à désirer, chacun termine ses voyages, et l'Aimant occupe son repos à posséder le Fer, comme le Fer ramasse tout son estre à jouir de l'Aimant. 45

Cyrano pursues this overtly sensuous analogy to the end of the passage. It is by means of the analogy alone that he manages to convince us of a connection between the magnet and the Poles. It is through the 'heat' of desire, or of the force of the imagination, that all the physical transformations and metamorphoses that occur in the Lune and the Soleil take place. Though he does not explicitly make any connection between the magnet and the Poles in terms of heat, the 'pure and subtle fire' which comprizes the seed of the solar Oresteian apple tree does seem to be of exactly the same nature as the 'petits corps ignés', or 'ces petits corps de vie' that, thanks to the Poles, 'circulate perpetually, penetrating in turn all the globes of the universe'. 46

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45. A.M., pp. 175-6 (quotation from p. 175).

46. A.M., pp. 174 and 175. Heat seems to be implied, also, in the stories of Iphis and Ianthe, and of Artaxerxes: Of Iphis, Cyrano says, 'tout son corps, imbu de ce fruit, brûloit de former des mouvemens qui répondissent aux antousiasmes de sa volonté' (A.M., p. 172); in the case of the Persian prince, 'la substance de ce fruit [an Oresteian apple] estant convertie, après les trois coctions, en un germe parfait, il en forma au ventre de la Reyne l'ambrion [d'Artaxerce] (A.M., p. 173).

Cyrano's description of the magnet's amorous behaviour is, then, more than just an extended pun of 'aimant' - 'aimer'; there is a more profound analogy here between love, movement and life, all of which are explained in terms of heat (or light), the expression of fire. The very deliberate parallelism of love language and natural phenomenon enables Cyrano to knit together into a comparatively harmonious whole his moral values and physical theories. By presenting as fact the events described in the arbres amants episode, Cyrano substantiates his morality. Likewise, each episode in the Autre Monde, itself a self-supporting world, joins with every other there, to build up into one set of values and one overall vision. Far from detracting from that vision, the disparate nature of the various strands of the two novels seems to add veracity to the overall picture.

It is love which unites all the theories expounded in the Autre Monde: love of fellow creatures, love of one human being for another; the love which begets new life, and the love between natural objects, whether animate or not, termed 'sympathy'. The verbal link between 'heat' of fire and 'heat' of desire, whether the desire be the force of the imagination or of sexual attraction, is of much deeper significance than mere word-play. All these forms of heat are life-giving. In an universe imbued with a fiery world-soul, all is 'fired' by that soul; thus it is that it is the magnet and the iron, described by Cyrano as 'cette couple d'amoureux sans vie',<sup>47</sup> which represent the life-spark. Love and Nature cannot but go hand in hand, for, in a sense, they are synonymous: love and the life-spark,

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47. A.M., p. 175.

the very soul of Nature, being but one and the same fire.

Madeleine Alcover, in introducing her brief mention of the arbres amants episode, speaks of 'cette théorie de l'univers-organisme, dont Cyrano a surtout fait une allégorie sexuelle et un thème de libertinage'.<sup>48</sup> While she does point out that the allegory is there primarily to posit the circulation of matter by means of the Poles, her attitude to the 'libertin' aspect of the episode, in itself typical of much scholarship on the subject, seems narrow, because dependent wholly upon moral censure. Isn't the argument the wrong way round? Rather than his picture of the universe serving as an excuse for bawdy diversion, is not the so-called licentiousness, in great measure, a means of putting across his view of the universe, a view which is concretized in the picture of the animate organism? Surely it is not accidental that Cyrano chooses Ovidian loves, notorious for their a-social nature, nor that he at once calls them 'criminels', while chastising the parents who destroyed the instigators of the loves. Just as for Théophile, so for Cyrano, it is society that is the culprit, for it attempts to curb natural, spontaneous forces. However paradoxical it might seem, love must always be good, since it is the voice of Nature. In emphasizing the paradox, Cyrano acknowledged a problem to which there is no answer, if, as is the case for him, love cannot but be regarded as life itself. Nature cannot be impugned, since she is the ultimate truth.

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48. Op. cit., p. 126.

We perceive precisely the same set of values in Charles Sorel's Francion. If Francion never - or hardly ever - rejects the multifarious offers of love from the ladies he meets on his extensive travels, this behaviour may be imputed to a serious philosophical conviction, namely, that the more women he manages to come into contact with, the greater will be his experience of the world-soul, and of life itself. His travels, too, are but the outer manifestation of a state of mind; as Francion fully realizes:

Mon naturel n'a d'inclination qu'au mouvement,  
 Mon souverain plaisir c'est de frétiler, je  
 suis tout divin, je veux être toujours en  
 mouvement comme le ciel.<sup>49</sup>

Far from being merely a libertin frivolity, the Francion depicts an attitude to life founded on what, in the 1630s, constituted sound philosophical principles. For Sorel, as for Cyrano, love is a cosmic force which moves men as it moves everything in Nature. If man has lost this estate, his social preconceptions would seem to be very much responsible for this; Cyrano's solar regions, like the Golden Age, allow a figurative recapturing of it.

As he takes the reader through manifold allegories, Cyrano is presenting a world in which the natural is marvellous, since, for him, the wonder of life consists in metamorphosis. In observing the changes of estate of the sun-inhabitants, Dyrcona sees their transition from one form to another; he

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49. Histoire comique de Francion, ed. E. Roy, Paris, 1924-8, vol. III, pp. 24-5.

witnesses that moment which, in real life, constitutes the moribund state on the one hand, and the moment of birth on the other. That instant can scarcely be described; it is prepared for by a kind of cosmic dance, but the crucial moment itself passes 'en un clin d'oeil'.<sup>50</sup> Just as Dyrcona did not learn the secrets of life contained in the fruits of the arbre de science, and just as the character 'Descartes' did not divulge all, so there is no real possibility of depicting the moment of transition. However, as Dyrcona passes through the regions of the sun, he does see, hear, and touch the very secrets of life allegorically: he understands the language of truth, he beholds the formation of an, in turn, vegetative, then sensitive, then rational creature, out of the mud: he witnesses the passage from one form of existence to another, and he visits the lake of sleep and the rivers of memory, judgement and imagination. For Cyrano as for Sorel, movement is not merely an interesting aspect of Nature, nor a way of describing life; it is life.

Whether one likes or dislikes Cyrano's use of metaphor, whether one regards it as original or as unpleasantly extravagant, it is the very stuff of his work. If one neglects, or chooses to ignore an episode on aesthetic or stylistic grounds, as seems to have been the case, for example, in critics' handling of the Gonzales and the arbres amants episodes, one will put out of

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50. A.M., p. 141. Cf. A.M., pp. 161-2: 'Or tu vas estre comme celuy qui n'est pas né; un clin-d'oeil après la vie, tu seras ce que tu estois un clin-d'oeil devant; et ce clin-d'oeil passé, tu seras mort d'aussi longtemps que celuy qui mourut il y a mille siècles'.

true the narrative as a whole. Most literary critics tend to consider the various linguistic devices and figures of speech associated with 'baroque' as adornment, as embellishments which only go to emphasize the discrepancy between 'être' and 'paraître'. Extended metaphors such as the description of love as the apples of Pylades's and Orestes's trees, the presentation of Nature as bejewelled and precious-stoned, or of man and the universe through equivocal figures of speech such as the conchetto, acutezza, or pointe, are decried on the grounds that they constitute disjunction of style and subject-matter, and thrive upon exuberant and unmeasured ostentation. Adverse criticism centres upon the aesthetically displeasing nature of what is seen to be an assault upon reason, measure, and in short, good taste. Yet, however true this may be, it does not alter the fact that, for Cyrano, this stylistic mode is not merely an externally-imposed embellishment, nor even one mode of thinking which is wittingly confronted with another, contained in the subject-matter, and alien to it; on the contrary, it and his vision of the universe go hand in hand, revealing exactly the same attitudes and exactly the same structural pattern. As our examination of the role of linguistic and allegorical analogy in the Autre Monde has shown, very often metaphor is the content.

In Cyrano's fictional world, language does not play the transparent role that a Malherbe would have it do; neither does it play the opposite one of pure embroidery. It often serves as far more than the vehicle for the transmission of an idea; it can form the very substance of the idea being expressed.

So, for example, the linguistic and philosophical clichés that life is movement and the soul a fire, are lent new vitality in a world in which metaphor is concretized, and this, in order to persuade the reader of the truth of the author's philosophical and moral convictions. While the reader may not be aware of the process, were he not to go along with it, suspending his disbelief, he would be unable to grasp the ideas pervading the work. The fact that the novels are fiction, and that the reader is quite familiar with the practice of accepting as true what he knows to be imaginary creation, allows him to accept the world set before him on Cyrano's terms.

Our findings may be checked against those of Dr. Jeanne Goldin in her study of Cyrano's Letters. Her book, Cyrano et l'art de la pointe (Montreal, 1973), is the first to afford serious consideration to the Letters, and the first to allow that they might have artistic merit. Proceeding inductively, she explores how the pointe works linguistically and stylistically, analysing copious examples from the Letters. She bears in mind the writings of Italian and Spanish theoreticians contemporaneous with Cyrano on the art of the conceit, and acutezza, as well as the more Classical viewpoints expressed by French theorists such as Lamy, Bouhours, and Boileau. After an extensive enquiry into the metaphorical world created in each letter, and, indeed, in each pointe or series of pointes, she relates this world to that of the Autre Monde. In Mme Goldin's study, as in this chapter, one is aware of the influence of critics who have specialised in the field of the 'baroque', and, notably, of Jean Rousset.

If the pointe is universally despised, there is some justification to be found for this in the very notion of it of its most enthusiastic exponents, given that we are adjudging it by classical criteria. In the preface to the Entretiens pointus, first published in the 1662 edition of Cyrano's work (the Nouvelles Oeuvres) and there ascribed to him, we read,

La Pointe n'est pas d'accord avec la raison; c'est l'agréable jeu de l'esprit, et merveilleux en ce point qu'il réduit toutes choses sur le pied nécessaire à ses agrémens, sans avoir égard à leur propre substance. S'il faut que pour la Pointe l'on fasse d'une belle chose une laide, cette étrange et prompte métamorphose se peut faire sans scrupule, et toujours on a bien fait, pourveu qu'on ait bien dit; on ne pèse pas les choses; pourveu qu'elles brillent, il n'importe ... C'est pourquoy, Lecteur, ne blâmez point ces contrariétés et faussetez manifestes ....; on n'a voulu que se divertir, et tant de beaux Esprits qui tiennent icy leur rang témoignent assez qu'ils ne veulent pas estre creus, mais seulement admirez.

When Bartoli wrote that the pointe was 'du faux et du frivole, sans solidité', or when Boileau dismissed it, saying that he would have 'la pointe frivole, aiguiser, par la queue, une épigramme folle',<sup>51</sup> they were at once criticizing the trope by the criteria appertaining to 'bon goût', namely, convenance, raison, médiocrité, and witnessing to exactly the same notion of it as that held by its proponents. Just as, in the Autre Monde, Cyrano makes marvellous, impossible, happenings natural and possible by telling Dyrcona and the reader that they are so,

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51. Cited by J. Goldin, op.cit., p.51. The Préface to the Entretiens pointus is reproduced in Lachèvre's 1921 edition of Cyrano's works, vol. II, p. 292.



in the same way, in the Letters, his very special use of language, almost entirely metaphorical, enables him to create out of what is manifestly paradoxical, 'false', and disconvenant, a new, hitherto undreamt of, world, which becomes the theme of each letter, crowding out its ostensible subject (whether that be love, natural scene, or even, satire).

Mme Goldin shows how Cyrano deliberately disassociates that which is normally associated, and associates those things normally considered, and seen, to be irreconcilable: As we instanced earlier in this chapter, in his love letters, he is particularly fond of causing water and fire to coincide; tears consume, while ardour, combatted, turns into ice a heart that kindled the flames of desire. Likewise, the greenest of trees - the cypress - is 'une pique allumée dont la flamme est verte' (thus, like, in its turn, the fire, becoming its complementary colour); the inanimate, man-created, object can become a living being: The aqueduct of Arcueil is 'un serpent liquide', dew drops are silver lice. The whole world can be turned upside down, just as trees in water become a world in their own right, making the subject of the image itself a reflection.<sup>52</sup>

In the same way, one form of living organism can become another, words lending to this wholly imaginative universe similar powers to those possessed by the sun-inhabitants:

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52. See L., pp. 203-4; pp. 208-9 (cf. above, pp. 439-40); pp. 41, l. 48; p. 30, l. 52; p. 21, l. 82. The last three examples are analysed by J. Goldin, op.cit., p. 118, n. 42, pp. 115-6, and pp. 116-7 with pp. 125-7. On the importance of the idea of reversibility, see ibid., p.159. These findings are independently corroborated by the detailed examination of one letter, 'Des Miracles de Rivière' (L., pp. 37-9), made by Jacques Neefs (Yale French Studies, no. 49, 1973, pp. 185-98).

Cyrano, the letter writer, becomes a salamander, the cypress, 'un lézard renversé'.<sup>53</sup> Cyrano links up pun on pun, metaphor upon metaphor, building up a world which has its own laws, and which is characterized by mobility and progression. The angle of vision is ever-shifting, the only rules or limitation being the verbal leit-motiv, as, for example, 'rousseur' in 'Pour une dame rousse', heat (and cold) in the second and fifth love letters (1654 edition), the shape of the cypress in 'D'un Cyprès', and money (louis d'or) in the third of the satirical letters, addressed to an avaricious and frivolous lady. One might compare these linguistic, metaphorical themes to the shapes of the infinitely numbered atoms that course around the physical universe, these themes determining the nature of the imaginary world created, just as atomic shape accounts for the variety of organisms.<sup>54</sup>

The role of metaphor in the Letters is to make the impossible possible. Disconvenance and the unnatural conjoining of the incompatible, like the disjuncture of the harmonious, is the very condition of creating such a world. All those critics who have dismissed the Letters so summarily, if not everything in the two novels along with them, have fallen into the trap of accepting, without question, the classical notion of reality, epitomized by a Boileau, together with all its

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53. L., p. 209, and p. 40, l. 7.

54. A.M., pp. 76-8.

attendant aesthetic assumptions.<sup>55</sup>

Certainly, the Letters and the Autre Monde embrace the world envisaged by means of the pointe within completely different contexts. The word-play of the love letters, for instance, is an adornment imposed upon the main theme, which can run directly counter to it in mood and style. However, I think it is no accident if the reader is invariably astonished at the dexterity of the writer's verbal associations, rather than moved by them. This wonderment and admiration serves precisely to alienate the reader from the pretended emotional experience of the writer: The more earnest the protestations of consuming passion and dying languor, the less moved do we become, just because the intensity of the passion is matched by the exaggeration of the word-play. The end-result is the very opposite of that achieved by the tragic hero and this, because the one ability which is singularly lacking in the

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55. Cf. J. Goldin, op.cit., pp. 179-80: 'En prenant comme norme, une certaine idée de la nature et de la vérité, l'on peut considérer que tout ce qui se surajoute à l'une ou à l'autre, les dénature et, par conséquent, est inutile, malsain et dangereux. La pointe est alors au style, ce que le fard ou les verroteries sont à la beauté féminine, la couleur, au dessin..... La couleur peut agrémenter la précision du tracé, comme la décoration, la nudité architectonique ou les figures de rhétorique, le sérieux de l'enseignement, mais en aucun cas, l'ornement ne doit prendre le pas sur ce que l'on considère la fonctionnalité de l'oeuvre. Cette conception de l'art et l'éthique qui la sous-entend, sont parfaitement cohérentes et toujours actuelles. Ce sont elles qui expliquent, encore de nos jours et surtout en France, les réticences au baroque.

Il n'en reste pas moins vrai que, si l'on se place au point de vue inverse, où l'art est supérieur à la nature, et le plaisir à l'enseignement, l'ornement n'est plus un élément surajouté, mais fait partie intégrante de l'oeuvre'.

tragic figure, the ability to view his predicament from a distance, and to smile or laugh at it, is the very ability which the creation of such chains of puns suggests is possessed by the love-sick writer of these letters. The general effect is wittingly humorous. This element is almost completely absent from the Autre Monde. Dyrcona never laughs at his own antics; he is a picaresque, not a comic, nor for that matter, tragic, hero. Apart from the Toulousain incident, nowhere are his feelings communicated to us in anything other than the most perfunctory manner; they serve rather as matter for Cyrano's theory of the emotions, or of the force of the imagination. In the Autre Monde, all the techniques and ways of seeing characteristic of the pointe are evident, with this one exception. May it not well be the case that one can understand better the predilection Cyrano held for the pointe in his other works, within the light of the Autre Monde, rather than the reverse? For, its very mechanism illustrates a way of thinking which obtains in every part of his work, whether expressed in the form of the pointe or not. As Jeanne Goldin explains:

La métaphore, qui consiste justement dans le rapprochement lumineux de deux choses obscures, entre dans le contexte plus vaste d'un monde analogique. Et l'on a vu que, dans la philosophie de Cyrano, l'unité de la matière, la cohérence de sa démarche, ne contredisent pas l'idée d'une correspondance secrète entre les différents niveaux de l'univers.<sup>56</sup>

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56. Ibid., p. 199.

The resolution of contraries in linguistic similitude, the turning of the world upside down to reveal its truth from a - to man - alien angle, and the ever-shifting verbal links revealed between disparate objects, all these facets attributed to the pointe marry with Cyrano's vision of the Universe as an infinite, yet monistic, physical totality. His linguistic mode is directly relatable to his physics and ethics, and continues to be so even when the context is neither physical nor ethical. I would, therefore, go so far as to suggest that, even in such frivolous letters as 'Pour une Dame rousse', 'Effets amoureux d'une absence', and the half-dozen love letters left untitled, where the main theme appears to be love, the pointes that express the writer's sentiments are the least ornamental part of his thought (that is the least external to the main purpose): It is the purported main subject, love, which provides the canvas upon which is depicted a concept of reality peculiar to Cyrano.

Again, on the occasions when, in the Autre Monde, Cyrano explicitly states that the phenomenon described is astonishing, miraculous, and awesome, his end purpose is other than that of astonishment, which serves a narrative function subsidiary to that other end purpose: to describe a view of reality founded upon a clearly delineated physical system and moral intent. It is the expressive means which are complex, not the end to which they are put. So, the ever-shifting and episodic progression of images and fictitious stories (analogous to the disjunction of components which go to form a successful pointe), translates most faithfully that eternal change which

characterizes reality and defines the constant, Truth. The 'continuous becoming' of Cyrano's metamorphic and metaphorical world is not merely a stylistic mode; it is his world.<sup>57</sup> Its function is not mere ostentation, as Rousset would have us believe is, in great measure, the case for many French 'baroque' poets; nor is it even a means for discovering a reality hidden behind shifting and deceptive appearances, since, for him, as we have already shown (in chapter VII), existence consists precisely in those appearances. Appearance is reality. There is no other level of being besides the phenomenological.

The more episodic the narrative, the more varied the stories and the imagery, the more diverse and numerous the attempts to describe each theory, the more nearly Cyrano approaches, in his style of presentation, to the very nature of Truth itself. In this respect, the style of Cyrano's narrative is quite as important in the interpretation of his ideas, as the bare skeleton of the idea itself. Even more, often the one is unmeaningful without the other, the argument falling to the ground without the support of the verbal analogies and general shape of the narrative.

Rousset points out that the larger context of the form of the baroque work as a whole presents the writer with a thorny problem, for the normal concept of a work of art as a

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57. Cf. M. Alcover, op.cit., p. 171: 'L'univers de Cyrano est un univers vivant, en continuel devenir. Le thème des métamorphoses, concrétisées souvent sous des formes narratives, fait intégralement partie de sa conception du monde. Cette conception est littérairement baroque et philosophiquement dynamiste'.

planned, and formally 'complete' whole runs directly counter to the concept of reality he wishes to depict:

Il existe un paradoxe baroque: le Baroque nourrit en son principe un germe d'hostilité à l'oeuvre achevée; ennemi de toute forme stable, il est poussé par son démon à se dépasser toujours et à défaire sa forme au moment qu'il invente pour se porter vers une autre forme. Toute forme exige fermeté et arrêt, et le Baroque, se définit par le mouvement et l'instabilité; il semble qu'il se trouve par conséquent devant ce dilemme: ou bien se nier comme baroque pour s'accomplir en une oeuvre, ou bien résister à l'oeuvre pour demeurer fidèle à lui-même.<sup>58</sup>

This belief, that the emergent organic nature of the writer's Weltanschauung would, ideally, be reflected in a similar stylistic form, is borne out in the Autre Monde in several ways: in the instability of characterization, each character's ideology being flexible to the point, on occasion, of contradiction (as in Gonzales's theory of matter); in the disparate associations and traditions which comprize his theories and images; in a dialogue form which, unlike the Socratic Dialogue, which advances by logical, though intricate stages, staidly, towards an eventual, rationally verifiable, conclusion, or the formal disputation, affords the possibility of presenting two facets of human judgement, in rapid, and quickly changing, succession, as episode succeeds episode, abruptly, without preparation; and, whether intentionally or not, in the abrupt conclusion to both Lune (in both final versions) and Soleil.

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58. La Littérature de l'âge baroque en France, Paris, 1954, p.231.

The formalism of the Medieval disputation is replaced by a dialectic which allows of the entertaining of a multiplicity of views, as of countless variations on a restricted number of themes. The picaresque-type hero, again, is in keeping with the world he encounters. Just as, say, Sorel's Francion possesses an ever-greater proportion of the world-soul as the number of his amorous conquests increases, so Dyrcona approaches ever nearer to the very secret of life, by observing and experiencing the panorama of creative possibilities which is set out before him on his travels, eventually to contemplate the very transition from one existence to another - a kind of ritual passage from life to death, and death to life, in the sun-inhabitants' metamorphoses.

In every formal aspect of the Autre Monde, the conceptual pattern of his thought is reflected. The spirit of the pointe, with its unpredictability and fluidity married to a foundation of analogical confrontation, in its turn, is evident in the very content of his thought. Linguistic analogy provides a necessary basis for many of his physical and moral tenets, as well as for the illustration of them; conversely, the contention that all is possible in the natural world is echoed in the very premise of all pointes, that all is possible in verbal analogy.)

The almost limitless possibilities of combination of various types of atom to form living organisms is paralleled by the almost limitless types of linguistic confrontation, which can combine only on a metaphorical level, in the pointe. Various types of word, or verbal concept, marry through association, just as, by sympathy,



or juxtaposition, atoms conjoin.

Cyrano would appear, then, to exploit all the means at his disposal to describe the richness and infinite possibilities of an universe which, being atomic, is at once, physically, very simple, and, in its variations upon that unique 'theme', extremely intricate; in other words, the condition of the coherence of the disparate whole is that very simplicity of physical principle. And so, not only are all means valid in presenting the wondrous nature of the natural, but their very incongruity enhances that impression of richness and unpredictability. The Pomponazzian notion that all is possible naturally is lent <sup>a</sup> much surer foundation with Cyrano's Democritean atomism. It is in this respect that we may talk of being at a half-way house between the sixteenth-century world of magic and initiatory 'science' and the eighteenth-century one of, first, inertia, and then, transformism. The baroque form, far from belying that physical world, far from constituting a deceptive, because purely decorative, outer adornment running counter to the subject matter expressed, aptly expresses the world with which it harmonizes at the deepest level.

Notwithstanding, all is not so happily conjoined in the stylistico-philosophical world of the Autre Monde, for, in one very obvious realm, linguistic form and content stridently move in opposite directions: Throughout, a material universe is described by images and incidents which would make little or no sense to a reader unversed in the material - spiritual

dualism of Western thought. While one might well argue that just such an incongruity between speech mode and 'faith' or 'science' persists still today, the most convinced atheist, for example, calling, albeit in metaphorically-couched distress, upon 'his' God, in the Autre Monde the reliance upon spiritual concepts is much further-reaching. Is this incongruity between materialistic universe and spiritual means of expressing it one of kind or degree? In either case, it reveals a problem which typifies the age, namely, that of how to express new ideas with only outmoded linguistic concepts and forms at one's disposal. It is a problem of which many of Cyrano's contemporaries were acutely aware, and it is one which the critic, Michel Foucault, has made his own in his now classic work, Les Mots et les choses.

To say something new may well require the coining of words, new combinations of words, or new methods of sentence construction. A society man who prided himself on his non-specialization, the Chevalier de Méré shows a pertinent awareness of the problem when he writes:

Ceux ... qui pensent des choses nouvelles, ne manquent jamais d'embellir ni d'enrichir leur langue, quand ils se mêlent d'écrire, parce qu'il faut des expressions nouvelles pour faire entendre ce qu'on n'a pas encore connu, et plus une chose est rare et délicate, plus il est mal-aisé de la bien exprimer.<sup>59</sup>

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59. Oeuvres complètes, ed. Ch.-H. Boudhors, Paris, 1930, vol. III, p. 130.

For the new philosopher, the problem was far more acute, since his rejection of traditional beliefs necessarily entailed the rejection of the methods of approach accompanying them, and the discovery of new truths, a language capable of accommodating completely new ways of thinking, be that language verbal or notational.

The awareness of Descartes, from the early 1620s on, of the need of a method for directing reason, one ideally that would follow and express the natural path of reasoning, and his early awareness of the value of mathematics, reflects both the need of a new philosophical language and of a new philosophy which could break with old, by then perfunctory, schools of thought and the logical systems attendant upon them. The notational vocabulary of the mathematician has the advantage of being able to express both the method and the substance to which the method is to be applied, and thus provides an internally structured link between mode of expression and content, signifier and signified, a problem and its solution, the known and the unknown. In this sense, the new philosophical language was to be as much a condition of the coming into being of the new science, as these new ways of thinking required that innovation in mode of expression.

That the Renaissance man did not feel burdened by such problems is due to his very special conception of language, and of its function in the world. Largely neoplatonically fashioned, that world was very much an untidy, triad-ridden series of analogies, and the expression of it part and parcel of its very meaning.<sup>60</sup> In the second chapter of his Les

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60. See E.M.W. Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture, Harmondsworth (Penguin Bks.), 1963, p.60: 'It was mainly the Platonists

Mots et les choses, Michel Foucault explores this essentially esoteric world of similes and sympathies precisely from the viewpoint of the attitude to language that it presupposed; and, in his third chapter, he depicts the confrontation of that world with the attitudes which arose in the seventeenth century. A fitting background to this new treatment of sixteenth-century common-places is provided by the earlier studies of the Renaissance concept of the pagan gods by Jean Seznec, and of the relation between Renaissance painting and neoplatonic writings of the period by Edgar Wind. Frances Yates's various studies of aspects of that world of esoteric arts, likewise, explain and express the same world-picture.<sup>61</sup>

Analogy, then, is the basis of all occultist 'sciences', visual and verbal resemblances being their very foundation-stone. Foucault points out that the only limitation on a seemingly infinite number of chains of similitudes is the micro-macrocosmic correspondence: 'la nature, comme jeu des signes et des ressemblances, se referme sur elle-même selon la figure redoublée ou cosmos'. To mirror is, necessarily, to establish the confines of the object reflected; the contours of the micro, and macro, cosm are identical.<sup>62</sup> As each of

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60. Cont/...who made less tidy and more picturesque a world which in the medieval view had been given a mathematical neatness'. Cf. E. Wind, Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance, (Penguin Bks.), 1967, p.40, where he explains how the different components of any given triad play a shifting role, and p.9, where he cites Plotinus on the role of language in knowing, viz. 'He that would speak exactly must not name it [the One] by this name or by that; we can but circle, as it were, about its circumference, seeking to interpret in speech our experience of it, now shooting near the mark, and again disappointed of our aim by reason of the antinomies we find in it' (Enneads VI, ix, pp. 3-4. trans. Dodds).

61. See J. Seznec, La survivance des dieux antiques, London, 1940; E. Wind, op.cit.; F. Yates, The Art of Memory, (Penguin Bks.), 1969, and Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, London, 1964.

62. Op.cit., p.46.

the studies just mentioned demonstrates, most Renaissance or Neoplatonic analogies are neither so tidy, nor so perfectly matched, as is the micro, macrocosmic one, and, even here, the modern mind might well feel that some of the synonyms which appertained to it are a little forced. Perhaps the nearest equivalent to the hidden relationships between sign and signification which the sixteenth-century magus sought to divine or uncover, would be the psychoanalytic practice of interpreting the dream. In this, however, there is a finite control in the actual data of the dream, and in the associative possibilities of which its owner's imagination is capable. The sixteenth-century philosopher, by contrast, admits of all utterances as valid, since, it was believed, God originally endowed Man with the language of Truth, lost subsequently to him along with his innocence when the forbidden fruit was sampled.

Thus, the Encyclopaedic mode is a constructive one, which serves an epistemologically valid role. However imperfect our language, it does provide a link with the former perfect tongue, when words revealed the essence of things. Similarly, time had endowed the writings of Antiquity with an authority tantamount to that of Nature herself. Therefore, erudition is a path to knowledge, and however imperfect the process, and however unverifiable, verbal, like visual, analogical interpretations may serve as the path to knowledge. The more varied, and the greater the profusion of, those interpretations,

the greater the chance of stumbling upon the 'true' one. The word holds a power which it loses in its new role of conveyer of ideas purely and simply.

As Foucault points out, it is precisely in the first half of the seventeenth century that the verbal as the visual world of analogies loses all epistemological significance, to become at the hands of the baroque writer and artist, as well as at those of the new philosophers, a mere game:

L'âge du semblable est en train de refermer sur lui-même. Derrière lui, il ne laisse que des jeux. Des jeux dont les pouvoirs d'enchantement croissent de cette parenté nouvelle de la ressemblance et de l'illusion; partout se dessinent les chimères de la similitude, mais on sait que ce sont des chimères.<sup>63</sup>

For the Neoplatonist, mystification, obscurity, and complication is a sign of possible success in unravelling Nature's secrets;<sup>64</sup> for a Descartes or a Pascal, such manifestations are a sign of inability to conduct an argument effectively, or to reason well. Once the assumptions of the esoteric writer are removed, the sixteenth-century magus becomes a curiosity, and the encyclopaedist, a pedant. Le Pédant joué typifies the reactions of a generation in this respect. The aim of the new philosophers, as of the 'modernist' writers, to use language as a tool, is diametrically opposed to their predecessors'

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63. Ibid., p. 65.

64. Ibid., pp. 47-9.

concept of the verbal. The word loses its special significance: now, signifier and signified must be in direct relationship. Translucence takes the place of willing obscurity; semantic clarity goes hand in hand with the realization of the importance of analytical method and order. The condition of modern science and the language of Classicism are features of one and the same response to the past.

Here too, Cyrano reflects both the old tradition and the new turning away from it. For while he does not embrace the epistemology of his immediate predecessors even when he borrows directly (or possibly, indirectly) from them, the analogical method which pervades his writings is not purely ornamental, and functions in the very manner which Descartes had already decried in the Regulae: his analogies are not always complete but, like the triads of the Neoplatonists, and the correspondences of his sixteenth century forerunners, shift their ground. Yet, he depicts a universe devoid of esoteric and mystic ramifications: the symbols of the Renaissance world become the very means whereby he can decry their original import, and the values they had expressed. The encyclopaedic idiom, as the analogical one, has lost its former epistemological significance, yet much of it remains, to represent the spirit of an altogether different world in which reality is an ever-shifting series of appearances, not a realm hidden beneath them. Cyrano's use of the myth of the Golden Age, of the micro-macrocosmic correspondence, and of spiritual terminology, demonstrates yet again the polarisation between his material and his end-purpose.

Renaissance, as Medieval man, and as, on the one hand, the writers of Antiquity, and on the other, the author of the Pentateuch (Moses), looked back to a golden age, in which Truth, Goodness, Beauty, and, above all, innocence, prevailed. Man knew all, and lived in harmony with all living creatures. Though not chronologically verifiable, that age did exist; at a point in time, innocence was lost, sin was born: Pandora's box was opened, Eve ate the apple of perdition. Just as the hermetist looked back to the writings purportedly of Hermes Trismegistus, equating him with Moses and Christ as Magi, and believing that he did exist, so too, the golden age, the garden of Eden, the tree of knowledge, the universal language, all are historically valid, in the eyes of sixteenth-century scholars. Cyrano plays upon these assumptions, but sets them into a new context, of his own making, to which he subordinates the legend itself. Now he plays upon the notion of knowledge, of Truth, innocence, wisdom; now, satirically, upon that of the loss of these. The anthropocentric ramifications of the original - even man's talking to birds and animals reflecting upon the state of grace of Man, not Nature, are put to an anti-anthropocentric end, through anthropomorphic means: in Cyrano's omni-present golden Age, located geographically, not historically - in the regions of the Sun - Man may converse with other creatures, vegetative and sensitive, because Truth and Nature are one; the emphasis is a-anthropocentric, and a-historical.

The Universal Language has little to do with linguistic theory, and nothing to do with the idea of a bridge between it



and present-day languages, via edification and interpretation, but Cyrano makes his point by assuming a knowledge of the concept of a tongue of innocence in his reader. The theme is doubly exploited, again, in a reference to it in the Pylades/Orestes episode: lost to men on earth because of the envy and hateful lack of generosity of parents, the Oresteian apples, representative of the main natural impulse, Love, do not cease to exist, a tree of that species subsisting in the Sun. The whole idea of a wondrous natural realm in which all species live together in harmony, according to natural law, illustrates, in the Autre Monde, a morality alien to the whole concept of innocence versus sin, which the Adam and Eve story exemplifies.

The use of the micro-macrocosmic correspondence theory in the episode of the metamorphoses of the Sun-inhabitants again witnesses to the break-up of the world-vision attendant upon that image. The various metamorphoses of the sun-men, now into a river, with their leader as nightingale, now into eagles, now into a precious, bejewelled, tree, illustrate the whole notion of matter as formally interchangeable. The beau jeune homme epitomizes micro-macro-cosmic correspondence, he containing and comprizing, literally, a host of autonomous beings, each capable of taking on the qualities of any part of the universe, substantially. In the Circularité universelle episode, the idea of the little world of man receives a characteristic seventeenth-century displacement in that man is the centre of two worlds - infinitely great and, almost, infinitely small. The correspon-

dence between Man's bodily parts and specific parts of the cosmos has been replaced by an atomic theory of matter which grants man no privilege over the rest of the cosmos, nor even over the mites that comprize him. The visual image remains, but carries none of the traditional qualitative inferences. In both instances, the import of the episode bálies the original significance of the image, and even runs directly counter to it; in both, the substratum consists in an 'all in all' atomic theory of matter, which implies that all creatures, being fashioned out of the same prime matter, are of equal cosmic importance. Cyrano makes use of an image central to the Renaissance man's notion of himself and the cosmos to destroy all the values of that world which the notion had implied.

Exactly the same pattern is revealed in Cyrano's use of spiritual terminology. Here, however, one feels that the reason for the very use of outdated concepts (for Cyrano at any rate), are less defensible, though even more understandable: How could a man of Cyrano's generation think in other than dualist terms, and this even when free enough of social and religious norms to question their very foundation? The duality of existence, stemming from pagan and Christian culture, pervades every aspect of human life, social, legal, political, as well as religious, and its vocabulary is an integral part of the language of that time. The audacity of questioning the very concept itself is all the greater, considering the imprisonment of the breaker of tradition in the linguistic mould of that tradition. Again, this retention of an anachronistic vocabulary calls upon the associations of

reader as well as writer, and does so within a context that denies the substance of the association. Thus, the fiery atoms being equated with Life, fire is described as 'cette poussière quasi-spirituelle'; the metamorphoses of sun-men are 'miraculeux quoique naturelle'. The apparently far-fetched, and, to some, frivolous, ideas of Dyrcona's transparency on his arrival on the Sun, of his lack of the need of food there, and in its environs, its heat maintaining his bodily temperature, even the idea of a sun, the rays of which do not burn Dyrcona, the sun's matter being indestructible, all draw upon the assumptions and values that attend the concept of a spiritual dimension, but do so in order to depict a wholly material natural world.<sup>65</sup>

That Cyrano draws upon the whole range of ideas belonging to the thought mode of Renaissance man provides the ultimate paradox in his work; for he does so in order, expressly, to deny the authority of the very authors and schools of thought which his predecessors admired, and to whom they looked as the models of truth and wisdom. It is his very anti-anthropocentrism and his questioning of tradition and authority which demonstrate conclusively the break-up and rejection of sixteenth-century values in Cyrano's universe.

The authority of the written word is rejected along with all other authorities. The idea that there is value in a variety of opinions, since each might well be a representation

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65. A.M., p. 126; p. 141; pp. 134, 125-6.

of the lost true language, is no longer viable. Just because men proffer an opinion, we do not have to believe them. Just because a thing has been said, there is no reason whatsoever to assume that there is any truth in it. In his letter 'Contre les Sorciers' Cyrano explicitly distinguishes between what men say and what is; in so doing he makes a distinction quite alien to the way of thinking of his predecessors, and even to some of his contemporaries who still look backwards to past authorities for their standard of truth. 'On ne doit pas croire toutes choses d'un homme, parce qu'un homme peut dire toutes choses', writes Cyrano.<sup>66</sup> Only in Montaigne do we perceive, among the Humanists, an independence of mind comparable to the attitude which Cyrano was to adopt, and, even though Montaigne's writings pre-date Cyrano's by seventy years, there are few in the 1650s who would have gone as far, or stated their position so trenchantly.

The Hermetist's craft, in particular, had relied upon a belief in the authority of Antiquity. Without the belief in the sacro-sanct nature of his source material, the Hermetist lost much of his own.<sup>67</sup> The Word loses its significance, its

66. L., p. 68, ll. 71-2.

67. This, at any rate, is the conviction of Frances Yates, who writes: 'The dating by Isaac Casaubon in 1614 of the Hermetic writings as not the work of a very ancient Egyptian priest but written in post-Christian times, is a watershed separating the Renaissance world from the modern world (Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, p. 398).

power having stemmed from the conviction that the key to the truth lay in the distant past. When, till then, hallowed laws as to how to conceive and interpret the visual are questioned, neither the verbal nor the visual retain any primacy over other mental or sensual data, and the cults that had taken that primacy for granted lose all credibility.

While Cyrano may not fully have grasped the import of his attitude, just as he fails to understand the central issues of Cartesian philosophy, or to conceive of Gassendist ideas in a Gassendist manner, his refusal to preempt experience with 'principles', places him squarely among the so-called 'moderns'.<sup>68</sup> In short, his attitude to Man and to knowledge, and his belief that there is no necessary link between a man's utterances and the truth they may contain, constitutes predecessors. That he should resort to sixteenth-century a rejection of the whole ethos of his sixteenth-century/modes of expression, and that he should even use the ideas of typical sixteenth-century thinkers, to transmit to the reader his vision of the universe, does not compromise this position, nor detract from its validity.

Thus, it is not so much because Cyrano adopts particular theories, today associated with the new science, that he may claim a right to be regarded as 'modern', as because he never wavers in his rejection of doctrines which either, do not leave

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68. A.M., p. 54: 'Aristote ... accommodoit des principes à sa Philosophie, au lieu d'accommoder sa Philosophie aux principes'. Cf. L., pp. 67-8, ll. 49-71.

men free to judge without prejudice, that is to assess reality according to their experiencing of it and their good sense in adjudging that experience, or, actively distort his very registering of experience, by providing a false premiss, such as the belief in the central position and importance of man. Cyrano does not adopt the new Astronomy within the context of inertia, neither does he describe 'inventions' within a technological context. To try to allot originality to him on twentieth-century criteria as to the value of seventeenth-century science is, therefore, both to distort his thought, and to refuse to assess it within the intended context - that of an ethical, rather than a purely scientific or philosophical, fable.

Again, criticism falls short if it mistakes the means for the end: The witch-hunt of Dyrcona in the Toulousain area acts as a foil to the Soleil, just as the discussion between Dyrcona and the governor of Quebec sets off and situates the discoveries made by the hero in the moon. Overall, the strange coincidence of his discovering Cardano's work opened at the page describing the meeting with lunar visitors, on his desk, on returning home, after discussing the possibility of the inhabitation of the moon, which introduces the Lune, sets the atmosphere and condition of interpretation of both novels. The reader may be transported into a magical world, but Cyrano, is not himself a sorcerer. On the contrary, his, and his hero's attitude throughout the Autre Monde, exemplifies the stand already taken in the Lettre contre les Sorciers: 'on ne doit croire d'un homme que ce qui est humain, c'est-à-dire

possible et ordinaire',.<sup>69</sup> The most fanciful of his episodes yet serves to illustrate this principle, which obtains throughout the Autre Monde, and indeed, throughout his work as a whole. The Letters themselves are effective just because the author of them is fully cognizent of the distinction between fancy and fact. Thus, to label Cyrano a poor philosopher, as critics from Brun to Alcover have done, is to miss the point. Indeed, even Cyrano's concept of 'philosopher' is quite other than that of these critics; by that term he does not seem to have in mind the initiated in any academic discipline, but rather, a more Platonic concept of wise man, or sage, as a Socrates is depicted, or the Guardians of the Republic. The philosophers of the Sun-regions are men endowed with excellent organs, not vast learning or the ability to make scientific discoveries, nor even with that of arguing according to the rules of logic.

Cyrano's world-vision has to do essentially with a notion of Man and Nature which upsets all the traditional hierarchies endorsed by orthodoxy. In displacing Man, however, he restores him to his natural habitat: it was men's preventions in the form of their society, religion, and politics which at once afforded them a place in the environment and made them feel morally superior to it. Modern man becomes alienated from that environment, while yet remaining superior to it, on account of his belief in an inert world and in his sole possession of Reason - Cyrano stands here, too, at a half-way position

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69. L., p. 68, 11, 71-2.

between the medieval world and that of the enlightenment. Man is integrated into Nature, and, despite his Reason, is able, through his sensation, to identify himself with his environment, and to regard his moral purpose as a part of the moral purpose of that natural whole. He is not superior to it because of his Reason, but more obligated to use that endowment in pursuit of Nature's, and not merely his own, good. Thus, it is not surprising that he conceives of Time in a cyclical way, and not in the modern, linear, manner. Just as season follows on season, death upon life, and life, death, so too, neither the emergence of new forms, of new continents, nor even the emergence or disappearance of qualities in a single human being, are conceived of in terms of ordered progression. There is in no domain a concept of movement vertically from any point (a) to (b) to (c) and so on; a life, like a season, may be perceived as a moment in time, or an entity, of finite value. Life gives way to life, one continent to another; one world emerges as a sun dies, all recurring indefinitely, just as season on season. In this, in my opinion, Benoît de Maillet attributes erroneously to Cyrano a forward-looking approach to the question of emergent forms;<sup>70</sup> by contrast, the notion of progression of form, or of time, as vertical or linear was to be a necessary element in the transformism of a Lamarck or a Darwin, just as it was of Diderot's theory.

Organisms, like worlds or men, are perceived in qualitative and moral terms by Cyrano, not truly scientific

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70. In the Preface to his Telliamed, Paris, 1748.



ones. It is the value and force of life that is worth measuring, not its length or chronology. I think that, in this, as in his thought as a whole, Cyrano is very much a man of his time, and it is precisely for this reason that his work is fascinating. It is the way in which he reacts against the 'Establishment' that typifies his generation. As a case-history, he holds greater interest, in this respect, than, say, a Descartes, a Malherbe, a Galileo, or a Garasse. The most rewarding critical method one can adopt, therefore, in attempting to elucidate this, as, indeed, any work, is the one which will allow it to speak to us on its own terms, rather than through those of another, later, generation. This, at any rate, has been my aim in this study, and it is this world that I have sought to uncover.

CONCLUSION

In this study, I have sought to discover the universe of Cyrano de Bergerac as perceived in his imaginative works, examining in greatest detail the two novels comprizing L'Autre Monde, by common consent the major of his works. The very wish to elucidate the thought of a writer of fiction occasions problems of method. To impute to the author the theories or opinions of any one, or even several, of his characters as against others is a common critical fallacy, and one which I have tried to avoid. And so, when assessing the importance of any one part or aspect of Cyrano's work, I have endeavoured to set it within the context of the whole.

By the same token, I feel that we can be even less sure of the value, in Cyrano's eyes, of each of his so-called 'scientific' hypotheses; especially does it appear tendentious to infer personal preference on his part, when, so often, several alternative and parallel explanations are promulgated by him of one and the same physical phenomenon or problem. On the face of it, why should not all the theories hazarded be equally viable to their exponent? It is for this reason that I have tended to question all those critical exegeses which have so confidently treated of the scientific inventiveness of Cyrano; and, too, the findings of those who have, at the outset, applied criteria extraneous to the works under scrutiny in the very choice of the subject of their enquiry. Thus, for instance, in this study, I have deliberately tried not to ask the question, 'is Cyrano a forward or backward looking thinker?', during the course of the enquiry into the nature of his universe, feeling it to be a

question most profitable to propound in conclusion. For the same reason, I decided not to select, at the outset, themes to explore, for fear of bringing into play twentieth-century preconceptions as to what is, or is not, important.

My aim having been to explore the universe of Cyrano as far as this is possible in Cyranian terms, my approach has been, in the main, an inductive one, supported, as preparatory work, by as wide a reading as has been practicable of late sixteenth-century and seventeenth-century writings, both fictional and philosophical. This has not been to say that the research of Cyranian scholars to date has not been fully savoured: On the contrary, as I think the body of the thesis bears witness, much of this study has been built unashamedly and profitably upon the foundations provided in the scholarship of the past two decades. And so, while the first six chapters are very much the results gained from the method just described, the seventh one arose out of striking contradiction between the account of the epistemology of Cyrano of Erica Harth and that of Dr Alcover. The final chapter, which began as an independent enquiry stemming from a certain puzzlement when faced with the varying critical assessments of Cyrano's commitment to the hermetic art, as from a fascination with the baroque and emblematic elements in his style, was enriched and itself substantiated by Dr Jeanne Goldin's perceptive exegesis of the Letters.

It was because the Autre Monde had been chosen as the text central to our enquiry, and because the first part of it, the Lune, at the beginning of our century, had caused not a

little debate as to its rightful form, largely owing to the expurgated state of the first edition of it, conjoined with the discovery of the Paris and Munich manuscript copies, that it seemed incumbent upon me firstly to clear the textual ground by making a comparative examination of the three versions.

The fact that we possess a manuscript of Le Pédant joué together with the bulk of the Letters, the latter dated 1651, as well as the 1654 first edition of both works, enabled a comparison to be made of the two versions, in order to establish the nature of revisions executed during the author's lifetime, most probably by the author himself. In the subsequent examination of the three versions of the Lune, then, we had a tentative point of reference in this comparison. The still current belief that Cyrano's friend, Le Bret, was responsible for the expurgations of the first edition of the Lune, and this, despite his protestation to the contrary in the Preface to that edition, made our task more complex, but, perhaps, also more worthwhile: in the light of a first-hand explanation at variance with legend, and of the fact that this edition appears quite clearly as one already revised prior to expurgation as against the Munich and Paris manuscript versions, I felt that the possibility of the first edition's being basically of Cyrano's making had to be afforded serious consideration.

Internal evidence demonstrates that both the Munich and Paris manuscripts are copies, the first having lacunae, the

second, emendations unlikely to have been perpetrated by the author. I think that my examination has shown that it is the simplest and the most likely hypothesis, that the manuscript which De Sercy used for the first edition did constitute the work of Cyrano, and that it was the latest version of the Lune extant at the time of his death. If this were indeed so, then, even granted that some at least of the expurgations of the first edition are not Cyrano's, this version should be accorded quite as much attention as those of the two manuscripts, if not more, given that we know that they are copies most unlikely to be the scribal work of the author, whereas the basic text of the 1657 edition is very conceivably directly attributable to him. The Paris manuscript being our most complete text, and being readily accessible through Lachèvre, I took this as the base text, but took into account throughout, in my own reading, all three versions. In a sense, we are faced with an embarrassment of riches, the Munich version being generally acknowledged as a copy of the earliest version, and the 1657 edition quite clearly incorporating elements of both manuscript versions, while, in addition, being equally clearly an intentional and skilfully executed revision of them. Without claiming too much certainty in our findings, I think that the similarity in technique between the revisions evident in the 1654 revisions of the Letters as against their manuscript version, and those between Munich and Paris manuscript copies of the Lune, on the one hand, and the 1657 first edition of it, on the other, do suggest that our comparative study of the three versions of the Lune, just as much

as our earlier comparison of texts in the case of the Letters, does show us something of Cyrano's method of writing, and of the seriousness with which he regarded questions of style. It was partly because of the problems of critical method attendant upon the exegesis of the thought of a writer of fiction, and partly on account of the importance of presentation and tone in the assessment of Cyrano's world, that I undertook to lay down guidelines in the same initial chapter as to the narrative roles played by the various main characters and episodes in the Autre Monde.

Our study has shown that there is far more consistency in Cyrano's vision of the universe than many critics have hitherto given him credit for. Though diverse physical theories are presented in the course of the novels, often contradictory in detail, and sometimes too in their overall line, certain tenets are held throughout: Throughout, the universe is imagined as being a monistic, material one, composed of an infinite number of atoms of a finite quantity of shapes, the movement of which is immanently determined. Throughout, life is imputed to the fiery principle, whether it be in the form of individual fiery atom or world-soul. That principle, then, like everything else in the universe, is material, atomic, and dynamic, so that, in a cosmos infinite in Space and Time, all is in all, and Nature infinite in its potential (save for the controlling factor of a limited number of atomic shapes), yet, at one and the same time, by definition, a single reality. If we take such a conception to its logical conclusion, then, the difference

between one form of life and another, as between one mode of living and another, consists in the quality of its movement. This deduction is substantiated by Cyrano's oft-repeated theory of the force of the imagination where desire, itself a form of heat or movement, can determine identity as well as personality.

Morally, the logical inference to be drawn from this world picture is that all manifestations of life are good, and that all types of creature are equally worthy expressions of a single untranscendental reality. It is, therefore, no surprise to discover that Cyrano's adoption of the classification of species familiar to his contemporaries and predecessors alike as the great chain of being, does not include the usual evaluative notion of scale. Far from the levelling consequences of the belief in a world-soul being undermined by its loss of spirituality in Cyrano's system, those consequences are reaffirmed by virtue of a monistic and atomically based materialism. Superiority in organic complexity does not imply moral superiority, but rather, a moral obligation: to fulfil one's potential as successfully as those lower in the scale, despite the greater gamut of possibilities entailed. Cyrano's understanding of the physical universe and his satire go hand in hand, for, ultimately, the universe of the Autre Monde is an artistic creation which serves to express a set of moral values. These may be reduced to the single precept, to revere and foster life in all and every one of its forms.

The main problem which confronts each human being is not whether or not he can possess or acquire knowledge, then, nor the elucidation of the best theory of knowledge, nor even

of means of knowing, but how best to live to the full. For, in a single, monistic, universe in which all is in all, being is knowing. To experience as fully as possible is to be rich in knowledge. Should one desire knowledge of that which stands outside of one's self, or body, or outside one's range of experience, (likewise determined by that bodily make-up), one must become that extraneous thing, or world. To know another creature, the sun-inhabitants, for instance, become that creature. Knowing is, thus, directly dependent upon the intensity of our desire to know. Since, then, to want to know is the very path to knowledge and the measure of our success in gaining it, it is quite clear that the search after a method by which to acquire knowledge is an irrelevance in Cyrano's system of things.

Now we see that once we examine Cyrano's world in terms of his depiction of it, and refuse to start from our reactions to it, we can explain away many of the contradictions that contemporary exegesists have purported to find in his ideas, and perceive that many of the questions traditionally raised on the subject of the Autre Monde become irrelevant. By contrast, new problems arise, problems which stem from the work itself, concerning matters of form, rather than of content abstracted from its context by the critic. One example of a traditional critical preoccupation that takes on a different complexion is the role of Gassendi and Descartes in the formation of Cyrano. The debate as to whether Cyrano is a Gassendist or a Cartesian loses ground, and whether or not correct, the opinion that the Lune reveals him to be the former, while the



Soleil shows that he has developed into the latter, is seen to be beside the point. For Cyrano's chief concerns are quite different both from Gassendi and Descartes; unlike Gassendi, he is not troubled by the problem of whether we can know reality, or the extent to which we may apprehend it, and, unlike Descartes, he does not set out to discover, nor perceive the need to discover, a method for using our faculties to best advantage in the search after Truth.

Much of the work done on Cyrano's Cartesian or anti-Cartesian leanings, as upon his modernity or lack of it, has depended upon his undoubted championing of 'reason'. However, as we have seen in chapter IV above, it is highly debatable whether his understanding of the word 'raison' is restricted to the specialized meaning allotted to it by Descartes, or even to a purely philosophical field of enquiry, as is the case for Gassendi. It is true that Cyrano's daemon makes a point of stating that man does not possess the full range of sensory faculties possible in a living organism, and says so in a manner reminiscent of a well-known Pyrrhonian argument; but, in terms of what man can under normal physical conditions experience or know, hindrance to knowledge consists in all those institutions and heads of institutions that set themselves up as authorities on what one is allowed, or not allowed, to do. Cyrano's clerics, academics, physicians, lawyers, like the bad king, are all of a piece in accommodating beliefs to the system that they are upholding, and not to the

evidence of what is. They are at one also, in curbing the free expression of all in their jurisdiction, whether that expression be intellectual or sensory. Since Truth consists in Nature's being what it is, and its creatures expressing freely and spontaneously what they are, then, all systems, which, by definition, entail organization, classification, and general principles, at best must thwart some creatures' spontaneous action. One cannot help surmising as to whether a method for conducting one's reason, however effective, would not, in Cyrano's judgement, have been necessarily restrictive, and, therefore, to be condemned.

That a mathematical approach to an understanding of the universe should be eschewed, and, indeed, explicitly condemned in the conclusion of the 1657 first edition of the Lune, is wholly in keeping with Cyrano's way of thinking in general, and with the complexion of the Autre Monde in particular. To try to assess his place in the history of ideas by setting his theories against those of the late Humanists on the one hand, and the new philosophers and scientists on the other, is misleading, since it places out of context the substance of Cyrano's novels: While this approach can produce interesting results, it is clear that Cyrano is not a scientist, nor even a philosopher in the accepted meaning of the term; he is a creative writer who depicts through the medium of contemporary ideas, and regardless of the discipline from which those ideas derive, his own distinctive attitudes and beliefs. This is, I think, well illustrated by his handling of the notion of spatial and temporal infinity and, more particularly, in his attitude to Time.

The one denominator common to all Cyrano's imaginative works, and to all aspects of his thought, is his conception of Time, and it is this same characteristic which is pivotal in determining his place in the history of ideas. It brings together the form and content of the works, and, in both respects, is the key to his presentation of an universe which, both formally and physically, consists in an almost ceaseless succession and spatially infinite number of ever-shifting vantage points within a single vision. For, though it is true that the universe is continuously 'becoming', yet, Cyrano presents this not as a linear and forward moving development, but rather, as an infinite extent of incommensurable presents. These may or may not be in a sequence: On the one hand, worlds do develop out of extinct solar ones, children do invariably derive from their parents, and their parents from grandparents; creatures do strive to rise up the ladder of creation, even though that ladder may have no hierarchical evaluative significance. On the other hand, the development of any particular form, creature, or world out of any other is as accidental as is the random conjoining, and disintegration of groups, of atoms. Likewise, a creature higher on the ladder of being may just as easily desire to become one lower down as the reverse, as is demonstrated by the sun-inhabitants' metamorphoses. In the case of human beings, while the fact of lineage cannot be denied, if only for satirical reasons the whole idea of heredity, or the direct transmission of soul through the family line, is. In short, whenever he describes change of estate, whether it

be of atoms combining variously with other atoms, of the mites who comprize infinitesimal worlds in worlds, of individual living organisms of more easily recognizable dimensions or species, or of emergent planetary worlds, Cyrano invariably emphasizes the random nature of the change. Where a series of movements is sequential, as notably, the passage of atomic matter through the chain of being, or that of fiery particles deriving from the solar world-soul through every part of the universe, this is cyclical in nature, not linear, or vertical. As for the pet theory of the force of the imagination, this cuts right across the very notion of sequence, and, by definition, excludes all adherence to general law, let alone the idea of linear progression.

Is it not, then, the immense variety of forms and combinations made possible by the positing of an universe infinite in space and time, that captures Cyrano's imagination? The finite number of shapes of atom is the sole limitation; such a vision of the universe allows of an almost limitless assortment of possibilities in what is, this notwithstanding, a single reality and a single truth. The fashioning force, fire, is itself unsusceptible of quantitative control or elucidation, and this, even though patterns may be discerned a posteriori in the nature of things. In this, his world is at once extremely complex and very simple: Paradoxically, to complicate by emphasizing all those contradictory truths and phenomena daily observed, is to offer an oversimplified account of reality. The regarding of time as an infinite number of

disparate presents, and space as an infinite extent of worlds, intensifies the impression of diversity and increases the instance of contradictory truths, all the while safeguarding the notions of unity and unpredictability.

In his insistence upon the plenitude of Nature, and upon the idea of change, and, in particular, in the positing of the theory of emergent worlds, Cyrano comes very close to the position to be adopted by Diderot a century later; but, despite the similarity in the very spirit and manner of their respective descriptions, the gap between them is unbridgeable, for it consists in a conception of time which characterizes Cyrano's world. Each moment, minute, or hour is irreplaceable, and is of importance in terms of the use made of it by the individual. The idea of historical progression has no bearing upon Cyrano's scheme of things, and would, if espoused, prove a hindrance to his moral directive, to live as intensely as possible in the present. Every aspect of Cyrano's thought runs counter to the notion of selection, whether that selection be natural or contrived, unconscious or conscious. Thus, it is no accident that Cyrano did not happen upon transformism, since the arguments essential to the theory are in direct conflict with his ethos.

If we can perceive an affinity between Cyrano's use of the idea of spatial infinity and that of his successors, this is because they took their lead from him, so that they all exploit it for its satirical import. Like him, Fontenelle, some forty years later, and then Voltaire, a century after the composition of the Soleil, play on the relativity of our vision

in a universe comprizing an infinite number of world systems, and do so with shifts of vantage point which upset our evaluation of size. Cyrano had demonstrated this relativity by means of Dyrcona's journeys to Canada, then to the moon and back, and, finally, to sunspot and sun. However these, like the comparative largeness of the lunarians, serve more as a framework for the satire on anthropocentrism which forms the main part of the Lune and, the episode of the birds, in the Soleil, than as a theme in its own right, so that the descriptions lack the incisiveness of his successors' portrayals, and do not manage to produce in us the acute feeling of vertigo achieved by Voltaire through a series of straight parallels, each of which abruptly forces the reader to shift his vantage point, at the behest of the author. As we have seen in our elucidation of the two halves of the argument of the Spaniard, Gonzales (in chapter II above), even when Cyrano does juxtapose diametrical opposites, while he carries the opposition through into every part of the argument, the parallelism in content is not simulated in the style, which is as florid and a-linear as is his vision of the universe.

The a-linear presentation of the traveller's experience of interplanetary travel, like that of Gonzales's all in all theory, typifies Cyrano's narrative technique. The fictional form of the Autre Monde too, proves to be an ideal medium for the expression of the infinite plenitude of the universe; for Cyrano's is an universe the potential of which is inexhaustible. A never ending present and a never ending extent, it is all, and all seems possible within its infinite

boundlessness. The discontinuity afforded by an episodic form, and the apparent gratuitousness and digressive nature of much of the content, emphasized in the manner of the telling, imitates the disjunction of the atoms, mites, individual organisms, and worlds, which, though disparate, yet, go to make up a necessarily compatible whole, called Nature. This is why Cyrano is so often content with an amalgam of partial truths, using these as the data to support a theory, and does not seek, as did his sixteenth-century forbears, to attain to the One via the multiple. His apparent modernity in acknowledging the intrinsic validity of the partial truth, taking for granted the one Truth that is the whole, and in dismissing the claims of all esoteric creeds, as of the transcendental, stems from exactly the same vision of reality as does his failure to grasp the importance to the new philosophers of a quantitative and progressive conception of time, or, following on this, of the possibility of relating mathematically time and space.

The whole idea of the coincidence, if not always the identity, of opposites appeals just because it caters for the undoubted coexistence of contradictory experience in everyday life. Cyrano shows little or no awareness of the importance of the acceptance of the worth of data relative to specific phenomena in the pursuit of knowledge, and none whatsoever of the value of controlled experiment; likewise, the idea of discovering new truths by discerning relationships between established partial truths, in terms, say, of mobility, extent, or duration, is completely alien to his way of thinking,

and must have seemed, had he reflected upon the idea so dear to Descartes, both irrelevant and worthless. For, the very attraction of partial truths lies in the frequency with which they reveal contradictory evidence, and the very attraction of the contradictory, often, in the impossibility of reconciling the two halves of the paradox. To show that contraries coincide, that opposites are identifiable, or are not, is yet another set of ways of stating that all is in all, or, that the whole contains every possible kind of being. Taking again the example of the Spaniard, Gonzales's two accounts of matter, we see illustrated there the similar function served by disjunction and identity, and, thereby, a complete and entire paradox. Thus, at Cyrano's hands, paradox, like analogy, does not serve to impose the limitation of straight opposition upon an unwieldy, infinite physical universe, lending order and symmetry to it, but rather, and in this, surely, a linguistic tour de force, to express the abundance assured by a physical world lacking symmetry and centrality.

The use of paradox is precisely the same in the Letters. Here, the play now on the coincidence of opposite terms, now on the simultaneous, yet distinct and proximate, existence of mutually exclusive ones, is the means whereby Cyrano creates a new, hitherto undreamt of realm out of the components of the everyday worlds of sensory and linguistic experience. Just as, in the Autre Monde, the daemon is at pains to point out that black and white, mountain and valley, or something and nothing can be reconciled without speciousness (in other words, each contrary term maintaining its intrinsic



nature whilst yet being identifiable with its opposite), so, in his use of the pointe, Cyrano exploits the double-edged quality of the perfect paradox. Again and again, he pushes to its ultimate limit the concept of reversibility, by juxtaposing the imagined world with the world as we know it, or, by means of the disparity between word associations, or the metaphorical use of a word, and a word's literal meaning. Cyrano's linguistic feats in the Letters are quite comparable with those of the mathematician who squares the circle. Heat can become glacial, cypresses flames at the very instant that the metaphorical flame, concretized, changes colour from red to green; fishes hang from branches as the terrestrial world is mirrored in, and becomes, the watery universe of the river. This dualism of vision pervades every aspect of the novels and letters, and, while less obtrusive in his plays, is perceptible in them also. It is an approach that is so recognizably 'baroque', that those critics who have examined this stylistic aspect of Cyrano's work have all tended to do so at the expense of his thought; even Dr Goldin does not perceive the relevance of a philosophical backing to her researches. Yet, the two are inextricably linked, and in separating them, the critic is merely choosing alternative means of apprehending a single reality.

In the Autre Monde, the mirroring so beloved of Cyrano's generation throughout Europe, and itself a literary expression of a visual commonplace complexly translated, in architectural form, by trompe l'oeil, is most obviously perceptible in the satirical monde à rebours technique used

throughout the Lune and, in the Soleil, more especially in the episode of the birds. Here the reversal is contained and limited by the beliefs, customs and institutions of his time, which the author wished to satirize. The wish, also, to depict an infinitely plenitudinous universe, however, causes him to resort to the mirroring type of image to push out the bounds of reality as we know it, and to pass beyond the limitation of the straight one-to-one reflection. And so, for instance, the micro-macrocosmic correspondence comes to express the notion of the infinitesimal, or of the possibility of becoming whatsoever one might desire to be, whether or not this flouts the rules of common experience. Analogy serves not to make a direct comparison between two things, but to portray a world of infinite and marvellous potentiality. Likewise with all contradictions or opposites. It is in this sense that the initial proposition that there exists an infinite number of worlds in worlds, sets the scene for the rest of the story, and coheres with other theories, such as the micro-macrocosmic one, which derive from the old, orthodox philosophy. To say that, in adopting the new astronomy, Cyrano stands for the new science is to be in danger of missing the main point.

Stylistically, La Mort d'Agrippine appears to be quite different from either the novels or the letters. It has a theme typical of the general run seventeenth-century French political tragedy, developed in the usual alexandrine rhyme scheme of that genre. In the telling of the story, however,

disjunction abounds, insofar that Cyrano depicts ruse, subterfuge, and cunning, by having each character dissemble so expertly that no-one, not even his purported allies, and certainly not the audience, knows at any one point in time his true allegiances, save the character himself. And so, as in the kaleidoscopic world of the novels and letters, the vantage point shifts from scene to scene, and from speech to speech. Here, too, there is portrayed an attitude to life that, once again, reflects Cyrano's qualitative notion of time: The only significant temporal categories are the moment of death and the life-span leading up to it. As in the picture of the terrestrial world reflected in water, life and death stand for two worlds which are distinct and opposed, yet if viewed in terms of death, an individual life (a human world), becomes reduced to an instant submerged in a never-ending series of instants. Viewed in terms of life, the fleeting moment that is a human existence expands in proportion to the intensity with which it is lived.

In all of Cyrano's imaginative works except Le Pedant joué, parallelism or opposition is a means of depicting that which is unbounded and which cannot be restricted to a simple opposition. In his comedy, it is true, the staple ingredient is linguistic analogy and metaphor, for traditionally in that genre, it is the very abuse of verbal association that marks out the pedant, and provides a main source of humour. Cyrano's seemingly inexhaustible supply of similitudes, placed in the mouth of pedant, captain, and peasant alike, by their exuberance and excess, are redolent of plenitude, but, though

the action depends upon these authoritarians' tirades, that plenitude lacks ideological point, its function being to portray the meaninglessness of the characters' every utterance. The greater the verbiage, the better does this express the message, that pedants and authoritarian fathers can be dispensed with without trace or loss. By contrast, in the Autre Monde, plenitude is the feature which characterizes the universe, and, in the Letters, where the chief figure of speech - the pointe - is the same as that in the comedy, it is the very fabric of a world which could not exist without it.

Is it not equally true that, in the novels, and more especially in the Soleil, pointe, emblem, allegory, and metaphor, as in the Letters and Le Pedant joué, are given literal meaning, thereby sustaining the world picture presented? Without these, would not the whole vision crumble? (If critics have tended to devote far more time to the Lune than to the Soleil, is this not due, at least in part, to the fact that they have also tended to ignore these formal aspects, which, though more prominent, and, for some, more obtrusive, in the second novel, are the substance of both works?) Every facet of the Autre Monde, whether apparently scientific, whether philosophical, social, political, epistemological, or stylistic, exploits the idea of paradox. Sympathy and antipathy, like and unlike, the reversible and the diametrically opposed are all rendered compatible, and ultimately identifiable as expressions of an all embracing Nature. The principle of the identity of opposites becomes, in Cyrano's work, a means of extending the limits of actuality,

just as the pointe does not merely distort reality, but changes and amplifies it, pushing out the boundaries of possibility to the point where a new world is created out of the components of the world as we know it, a world which differs in kind and not just degree.

In the last analysis, it is the human mind which is infinite in its capacity to imagine. Just as the mind can conceive of an infinite physical reality, so, through the capacity to conceive of it, man may prove a measure for it. As a match for the infinite God Who must surely have created an infinite universe, Cyrano the writer, the sole author of his imagined universe, stands for finite man with a hankering after the infinite. Small wonder that pedantic College regents, self-interested and prejudiced legal, political, and clerical dignitaries, emperors, monarchs and fathers, or even powerless but superstitious and narrow-minded peasants and gaolers, are anathema: All restrict and distort for their own petty ends. None of them has any inkling of the feats of which man is capable, for they run against life, deadening all initiative with cant dressed up as precept and principle.

To sum up: In the novels, Cyrano touches upon just about every philosophical and scientific theory current in his day; this is just what one would expect, however, of a work of interplanetary voyages, and in which the author has deliberately chosen not to choose. If there is one contemporary philosophical approach consistently absent from his work, it is that of the mathematician. The whole idea of abstracting quantitative data from a plethora of sensory qualities is quite alien to the

spirit of his writing. Likewise, to quantify time, to split it up into mutually exclusive categories such as past, present, and future, or into particular, clearly delineated pasts such as the minute, the hour, the year, or the century, is to impoverish his picture of the world. It is wholly in keeping with his morality, that he should seek to explain the world from the inside, seeking to uncover the secrets that it contains within it, for he envisages man as an integral part of that world.

It is hardly surprising, then, if Cyrano prefers the explanation of sympathy and antipathy to that of abstract relationships, and the dynamic atom to the mechanistic one. It is in terms of the life force that derives from within that his morality makes sense. Within the terms of that imagined world this morality cannot be questioned, whereas, if posited in a more recognizably philosophical discourse, it would be very much so. Thus, his notion of freedom, that is, of spontaneity and immediacy, appears to be in keeping with his picture of the universe, since it parallels the description of the random conjoining and dispersal of atoms, though, if examined with a philosophical eye, we perceive that that very picture of the physical universe rules out freedom of indifference. Again, his qualitative and non-progressive account of reality, appearing to lack overall organization, supports his attitude to authority, and his aversion for collective systems. In short, in the rejection of all abstract quantitative appraisals lies the nub of Cyrano's vision of the universe, so that, while it is true that there is proximity between the idea of random change and transformism, and while the preference for

reason over authority epitomizes the modern spirit, the complete disregard for any sequential conception of Time, space, matter, and even of human mores, together with the disinclination to select, or to impose rules, makes of Cyrano a man who did not grasp the world of the 'Modernists', nor that of the new philosophers. His championing of reason does not imply the championing of method, as in the case of Descartes, nor of progress, as understood by writers like Perrault or Fontenelle.

This notwithstanding, Cyrano's rejection of the supernatural, the mystic, the spiritual, and of all doctrines founded upon superstition, and his wholehearted espousal of materialistic monism, puts him in a class of his own among his contemporaries. His conviction that a man has the right to believe what, to him, measures up to the scrutiny of good sense and experience, together with his condemnation of all who would suppress the right of others to think for themselves, puts one in mind of Bayle, and of his eighteenth-century successors. It is in this context that Cyrano's refusal to dismiss summarily any theory or any experience, however much it might contradict another, may be adjudged as enlightened, and in complete contradiction to the encyclopaedic world of Medieval and Renaissance philosophy.

If so much of Cyrano's style may be called 'baroque', is this not because the so-called baroque form is itself a way of coming to terms with the rather special universe into which a man of his generation was born? The conceptions which grace the old philosophical world, those of sympathy and antipathy,

of life-giving heat and radical cold, of the microcosm and macrocosm, of a lunar and an earthly realm, of the alchemical and of the sun as world-soul, and of the whole structure of Neoplatonic as well as Thomist thought, with the scale of being and the principle of plenitude intact, become, for Cyrano, merely the vocabulary of a language which, though composed of such redundant concepts, serves to express a new world of infinite magnitude, in which man no longer holds a central position nor a distinctive role. Cyrano at once accepts that new world and manages to come to terms with it, by stating that man is still an integral part of it. Thus, he does not need to tackle the problem, so real to a Descartes, of how to become once more 'master and possessor of Nature'; nor does he feel, as does Pascal, 'le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis'. For, he offers us an infinitely populous and rich expanse, full of life, yet from which that other world, which formed a necessary part of the old one, namely, the spiritual one bounding and confining the finite universe, has been banished. Cyrano seems to get the best of both the old and the new worlds, for, in his figment, man retains a place, secure and secured, within Nature, while yet escaping the claustrophobic and restrictive glare of the central position, divinely governed, in the orthodox scheme of things. At the same time, if only in theory, he is able to be all in all.

A form which is recognizable in the literature of this period throughout Europe, the baroque idiom becomes, in Cyrano's hands, itself a means of expressing a vision which is



individually fashioned. Cyrano plays with all manner of philosophical concept, just as he plays with the verbal associations of love and grief, or with those upsetting visual impressions afforded by the mirroring quality of water which turns all topsyturvey. Confronted by a world in which fishes can hang on branches, and reflections of nightingales sing love duets to the real thing, eliciting a surprised response, in which trees can become men, and men (at any rate, sun-men) all manner of creature or thing, and in which death becomes but another mode of being, the reader is asked to question all accepted beliefs, and is offered in return the reassurance of being able, at least during the course of his reading, to cope with all eventualities, be they occasioned by the new astronomy or the hazards and uncertainties of everyday living. For, it is upon the constructive aspects of the human condition that Cyrano dwells: upon the giving and begetting of life, upon the solidarity of friendship, and upon the joys experienced by those who live generously.

If man cannot grasp nor comprehend spatial infinity, he can, and does understand the hankering after the infinite involved in all acts of creation, whether they be cerebral or physical; in this, Cyrano the thinker and Cyrano the literary artist are in full accord. For both, the world is a stage, and man very much a player on it; however, included in the cast is every manner of creature, and the stage upon which they perform is one of infinite proportions. As creator of both stage and play, Cyrano is essentially representative of homo ludens, and, like all great comic writers, marries serious intent

with an irrepressible sense of fun. By contrast, the genre of thesis would seem to require an earnestness quite out of harmony with the subject of these researches. Be that as it may, it is to be hoped that this example of the form, has, in some measure, helped to restore the balance, by enabling those who would sample Cyrano's imaginative works, to enjoy them on their own inimitable and engaging terms.

PRIMARY SOURCESI. The Works of Cyrano de Bergerac: Manuscripts and Editions Consulted.Manuscripts:

1. Bibliothèque nationale, Paris. Nouv. acq. fr. 4557; 210 fos. Le Pédant joué, fos. 2-93; Lettres de Monsieur de Bergerac, fos. 94-210.

Fo. 94 is dated 1651. Some 17 folios are cut out of the end of the ms.

2. Bibliothèque nationale, Paris. Nouv. acq. fr. 4558; 152 fos. L'autre Monde ou Les Etats et Empires De La Lune.

Headed by two dedicatory poems, signed respectively 'R. de P.' and 'De P.' [Royer de Prade].

3. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich. No. 420 (Gall. 419); 115 fos. L'autre Monde ou Les Empires et estatz De la lune.

First Editions (listed in chronological order):

4. La Mort d'Agrippine, tragédie, par M. de Cyrano Bergerac, Paris, Ch. de Sercy, 1654, 106 pp., in 4 [B.N. Yf 462].

Headed by a dedicatory letter to the Duc d'Arpajon, signed 'De Cyrano Bergerac'. Privilège du Roy accorded for 9 years, dated 16 Dec. 1653.

5. Les OEuvres diverses de M. de Cyrano Bergerac, Paris, Ch. de Sercy, 1654, 2 pts. in 1 vol., in 4 [B.N. Rés. m Z 341].

Lettres, 294 pp. Le Pédant joué, 167 pp.

Pt. I headed by a dedicatory letter to the Duc d'Arpajon, signed 'De Cyrano Bergerac', and a sonnet to Mlle d'Arpajon.

6. Histoire comique par Monsieur de Cyrano Bergerac contenant les Estats et Empires de la Lune, Paris, Ch. de Sercy, 1657, 191 pp., in 12 [B.N. Y<sup>2</sup> 25400].

Headed by a dedicatory letter to Messire Tanneguy Renault des Boisclairs, signed 'Le Bret', and an unsigned Preface (traditionally attributed to Le Bret). Privilège du Roy accorded for five years from the date of the achevé d'imprimer (acc. 23 Dec. 1656; reg. 26 Jan. 1657; ach. d'impr. 29 Mar. 1657). The end page lists the 'fautes principales survenueës en l'impression'.

7. Les nouvelles OEuvres de Monsieur de Cyrano Bergerac contenant l'Histoire comique des Estats et Empires du Soleil, plusieurs Lettres et autres pieces divertissantes, Paris, Ch. de Sercy, 1662, 2 pts. in 1 vol., in 12 [B.N. Rés. p. Z 2148].

Soleil, 556 pp. Nouvelles OEuvres, 168 pp. (These are: ten hitherto unpublished Letters, Entretiens pointus, Idee générale de la Physique, Fragment de Physique).

Pt. I headed by a dedicatory letter to M. de Cyrano de Mauvières, signed 'C. de Sercy', and an unsigned Preface (authorship unknown; attributed by Lacroix to Rohault). Pt. II. Privilège du Roy accorded for ten years from the date of the achevé d'imprimer (acc. 21 Dec. 1661; reg. 4 Jan. 1662; ach. d'impr. 7 Jan. 1662).

Other 17th Century Editions (listed in chronological order):

8. OEuvres diverses, Paris, Ch. de Sercy, 1661, 3 pts. in 1 vol., in 12 [B.N. Z 20087].

Histoire comique [the Lune], 191 pp. Lettres, 344 pp. Le Pedant Joté, Comédie, 152 pp.

Pt. I headed by the same letter and sonnet as in (5) above, and followed by a Table des Lettres [sic.]. The text of the Lune which follows has the same pagination as the 1657 edition, but with different type-set, and no music. The wrongly paginated pp. 51, 70, and 71, and the errata listed in the 1657 edition, have been corrected. Lachèvre (1921 edn, vol. II, p. 306) thinks this is a pirate edition of A. de Sommerville, and not De Sercy's.

9. OEuvres diverses, Première partie, Paris, Ch. de Sercy, 1663, 4 pts. in 1 vol., in 12 [B.N. Z 20089].

Lettres, 256 pp. Le Pédant joué, dated 1664, 177 pp.

Histoire comique des Estats et Empires de la Lune, dated 1665, 137 pp., [B.N. Y<sup>2</sup> 25401 is the same edition].

La Mort d'Agrippine, dated 1666, 72 pp.

Headed by the same dedicatory letter as in (5) above, but, without the sonnet. Followed by a Privilège du Roy accorded for ten years for all Cyrano's works, dated 21 Dec. 1661 (ach. d'impr. 9 Jun. 1663). The title page lists the 47 letters of the first edition of 1654, the Lune, La Mort d'agrippine, the Nouvelles OEuvres, the Soleil, 'et autres pièces'. There is, thus, a discrepancy here with the actual contents.

Pt. II, ach. d'impr. 12 Dec. 1663. Pt. III, ach. d'impr. 2 Apr. 1665. This has the same preliminary items as in (6) above (1st edn, 1657); the text lacks two paragraphs on p. 120 (cf. 1657 edn, p. 167), and the music differs. Pt. IV, ach. d'impr. 15 Mar. 1666.

10. OEuvres diverses, Rouen, A. Ferrand, 1663, 309 pp., in 12 [B.N. 8 Z 16161].

Contains only the 47 Letters of the 1654 edition, despite listing Le Pédant joué also in the Table des Matières. Headed by letter and sonnet of (5) above.

11. OEuvres, Paris, Ch. de Sercy, 1676, 2 vols., in 12 [B.N. Z 20090 - Z 20091]. / Vol. I, Lettres, Le Pédant joué, La Mort d'Agrippine, 468 pp.

With a new Privilège, acc. 29 Sep. 1671, reg. 3 Oct. 1671, ach. d'impr. 10 Mar. 1676. Headed by dedicatory letter as in (5) above.

Vol. II, contains the Lune, the Soleil, and the Nouvelles OEuvres [cf. Pt. II of (7) above, 1662 first edn], 448 pp.

Headed by dedicatory letters of 1662 edition, Pt. I, and of the first edition of the Lune (cf. items (7) and (6) above).

12. Œuvres diverses, Rouen, J.B. Besogne, 1678, 2 pts. in 1 vol., in 8 [B.N. Z 20092]. / Pt. I contains the Lettres [47 in no.], and the Lune, 419 pp. / Headed by the dedicatory letter and sonnet of (5) above. / Pt. II, Le Pédant joué, 154 pp.
13. Œuvres diverses, Paris, Ch. de Sercy, 1681, 372 pp., in 12 [B.N. Rés. Z 2886].
- Cf. item (11) above, vol. II, 1676 edn. This copy has the same pagination, but is incomplete: Only the Lune and Soleil feature, pp. 373 to 448 being described in a Table de Matières of the 'second Tome' at the end of the volume.
14. Œuvres diverses, Amsterdam, D. Pain, 1699, 2 vols., in 12 [B.N. Z 20095 - Z 20096].
- Vol. I contains Le Pédant joué, Lettres, the Lune, 430 pp.
- The Preface of the first edition of the Lune precedes the text of the novel. The text lacks two paragraphs on p. 418 (as is the case in (9) above, 1665 edn).
- Vol. II contains La Mort d'Agrippine, 'Fragment d'Histoire comique' [the Soleil], Nouvelles Œuvres [cf. (7) above, Pt. II, 1662, 1st edn], 306 pp.
- The Agrippine is preceded by the dedicatory letter of (5) above, and the Soleil by the Preface of the 1662, first edition (see (7) above).
- Modern Editions (listed in chronological order):
15. Histoire comique des États et Empires de la Lune et du Soleil, Paris, Garnier, n.d. [1875], ed. P. L. Jacob [pseud. of P. Lacroix]. Nouvelle édition [1st edn entitled Œuvres comiques, galantes et littéraires de Cyrano de Bergerac, Paris, A. Delahays, 1858, vol. I].
16. Histoire comique des états et Empires de la Lune et du Soleil, Paris, Ch. Delagrave, 1886, ed. E. Müller.

17. Le Pédant joué, Boston, Mass., 1899, ed. H-B. Stanton (Language of the text modernised).
18. Collection des plus belles pages: Cyrano de Bergerac, Paris, Société du Mercure de France, 1908, ed. R. de Gourmont. (Contains selected parts of Le Pedant joué, the Lettres satiriques et amoureuses, 'Scènes de La Mort d'Agrippine', Entretiens Pointus, the Lune and the Soleil, and the Fragment de Physique).
19. Savinien de Cyrano Bergerac's L'Autre Monde ou les États Empires de la Lune, Dresden, 1910, ed. L. Jordan. Gesellschaft für Romanische Literatur, Vol. XXIII. (Text compiled from the Munich and Paris manuscript copies, together with the '1659 printed edition').
20. Les OEuvres libertines de Cyrano de Bergerac, Paris, Champion, 1921, 2 vols., ed. Fr. Lachèvre.

Vol. I contains the Lune and the Soleil; vol. II, Le Pédant joué, La Mort d'Agrippine, the Lettres - those of the B.N. manuscript (see (1) above; they number 33); eight Mazarinades, attributed to Cyrano, with the 'Lettre contre les Frondeurs'; and the Entretiens pointus. Lachèvre attributes the 'Sermon du curé de Colignac', which he publishes in the Appendice, to Cyrano, also. A very complete Bibliography lists editions of Cyrano's works up to 1910 - but omits Jordan. The list of manuscripts includes one of the Lune, described as 'ex meis', '[qui] provient de la collection Phillipps, de Londres' (p. 314). The text of the Lune is based on the Paris manuscript with the variants of the Munich one, and of the 1657 edition.

21. L'Autre Monde ou Les États et Empires de la Lune et du Soleil, Paris, Garnier, n.d. [1933], ed. Fr. Lachèvre.

Also contains three of the Mazarinades of (20) above, with the 'Lettre contre les Frondeurs'. The text of the Lune is based on the 1657 edition, with the variants of the Paris manuscript.

22. Oeuvres diverses, Paris, Garnier, n.d. [1933], ed. Fr. Lachèvre.

Contains 54 letters, from the 1654 and 1662 editions, and from the Paris manuscript (see (1) above); it also contains Le Pedant joué and La Mort d'Agrippine.

23. L'Autre Monde ou Les États et Empires de la Lune, Florence, Fussi, 1956, ed. L. Erba. (French/Italian text)

24. L'Autre Monde. Les États et Empires de la Lune. Les États et Empires du Soleil, Paris, 1959, ed. H. Weber. Coll. Classiques du Peuple.

The Lune is unabridged, but much of the Soleil has been omitted: Summaries of the deletions are given.

25. Voyage dans la Lune et Histoire comique des États et Empires du Soleil, Paris, 1963, ed. W. de Spens. Coll. 10:18.

An incomplete text, with no summaries of deleted passages.

26. Lettres, Milan, V. Scheiwiller, 1965, ed. L. Erba.

This is the most complete edition of the Letters, 59 in number. Text based on the 1654 and 1662 editions with the variants of the manuscript, plus two manuscript letters described as 'inedite', though the first of these - 'Contre un Jé ... assassin et médisant' - is to be found in (20) and in (22) above.

English Translations (listed in chronological order):

27. ΣΕΛΗΝΑΡΧΙΑ [Selenarchia], or The Government of the World in the Moon. A Comical History, London, J. Cottel, 1659, trans. Th. St. Serf.

28. The Comical History of the States and Empires of the World, of the Moon and Sun, London, H. Rhodes, 1687, trans. A. Lovell.

29. Voyages to the Moon and Sun, London, G. Routledge, 1923, trans. R. Aldington.



30. Other Worlds. The Comical History of the States and Empires of the Moon and the Sun, London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1965, trans. G. Strachan.
- II. Works of Antiquity. Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century Works.
31. Anthologie de la poésie baroque française, Paris, 1961, 2 vols., ed. J. Rousset.
32. Le Libertinage au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, Paris, 1909-24, 11 vols., ed. Fr. Lachèvre.
33. Quatrains du Déiste, ou L'Anti-Bigot in Voltaire mourant, Paris, 1908, pp. 99-135, ed. Fr. Lachèvre, who dates this anonymous text as being written in 1622.
34. BALZAC, J.-L. Guez de. Oeuvres, Paris, 1665, 2 vols.
35. BAYLE, P. Dictionnaire historique et critique, Rotterdam, 1697, 4 vols.
36. BERNIER, Fr. Abrégé de la philosophie de Mr. Gassendi, Paris, 1674.
37. BERNIER, Fr. Abrégé de la philosophie de Gassendie en VII tomes, 2nd edn, Lyon, 1684, 6 vols.
38. BOREL, P. Discours nouveau prouvant la pluralité des mondes. Geneva, 1657.
39. BRUNO, G. Cause, Principe et Unité [De la Causa, Principio e Uno], Paris, 1930, trans. E. Namer.
40. BRUNO, G. Opere di Giordano Bruno e di Tommaso Campanella, Milan/Naples, n.d., ed. A. Guzzo and R. Amerio. Coll. La Letteratura Italiana, vol. XXXIII.
41. CAMPANELLA, Th. La Cité du Soleil, Paris, 1950, trans. A. Zévaès, from the first edition, Utrecht, 1643.
42. CAMPANELLA, Th. Opere. See (40) above.

43. CARDAN, J. The Book of my Life [De Vita Propria Liber], New York, 1962, trans. J. Stoner.
44. CARDAN, J. Les Livres de Hierome Cardanus medecin milannois, intitules de la Subtilité, et subtiles inventions, ensemble les causes occultes, et raisons d'icelles, Paris, 1556, trans. R. Le Blanc.
45. CARDAN, J. La Science du Monde ou la Sagesse civile, 2nd edn, Paris, 1652, trans. Choppin.
46. CHAPELLE [LUILLIER], Cl.-E. Voyage de Chapelle et de Bachaumont suivi de leurs poésies diverses, Paris, 1826.
47. CHARRON, P. De la Sagesse, Paris, 1783.
48. CHAUFFEPIE, J. G. de Nouveau dictionnaire historique et critique, Amsterdam, 1750-56, 4 vols.
49. COLOMBY, Fr. de Cauvigny, Sr. de. Discours présenté au Roy avant son partement pour aller sieger Sedan, Paris, 1606.
50. COLOMBY, Fr. de Cauvigny, Sr. de. De l'Autorité des Roys, Premier Discours, Paris, 1631.
51. COLOMBY, Fr. de Cauvigny, Sr. de. Discours panegyrique au Roy, Paris, 1631.
52. COLOMBY, Fr. de Cauvigny, Sr. de. Lettre à Monseigneur le Chancelier, Paris, 1624.
53. COLOMBY, Fr. de Cauvigny, Sr. de. Refutation de l'Astrologie judiciaire, Paris, 1614.
54. COLONNA, Fr.M.P. Les Principes de la Nature, Paris, 1725, 2 vols.
55. COPERNICUS, N. Des Révolutions des orbes célestes [De Revolutionibus], Paris, 1934, Latin text (of Thorn edn, 1873, transcribed from the original ms), with French

- translation of A. Koyré.
56. CORNEILLE, P. L'illusion comique, Paris, 1957, ed. R. Garapon.
  57. CORNEILLE, P. Théâtre complet, Paris, 1957, 2 vols.
  58. COTIN, Abbé Ch. Discours à Theopompe sur les forts esprits du temps, n.p., 1629.
  59. CUSA [CUSANUS] N. de. De la docte ignorance, Paris, 1930, trans. L. Moulinier.
  60. DASSOUCY, Ch. Coypeau. Les Amours d'Apollon et de Daphné, Geneva, 1969, ed. Y. Giraud. Coll. Textes littéraires français.
  61. DASSOUCY, Ch. Coypeau. L'Ovide en belle humeur, Paris, 1650.
  62. DESCARTES, R. Discours de la Méthode, Manchester, 1941, ed. G. Gadoffre.
  63. DESCARTES, R. Œuvres, Paris, 1897-1909, 11 vols, ed. Ch. Adam and P. Tannery.
  64. DESCARTES, R. Œuvres et Lettres, Paris, 1952, ed. A. Bridoux. Pléiade edn.
  65. DIDEROT, D. Lettre sur les aveugles, Geneva, 1951, ed. R. Niklaus. Coll. Textes littéraires français.
  66. DIDEROT, D. Œuvres philosophiques, Paris, 1964, ed. P. Vernière.
  67. DURET, Cl. Histoire admirable des plantes et herbes émerveillables et miraculeuses en nature, Paris, 1605.
  68. DURET, Cl. Thresor de l'Histoire des Langues de cest Univers, Coligny, 1613.

69. FENELON, Fr. de Salignac de la Mothe. Les Aventures de Télémaque, Paris, 1920, 2 vols., ed. A. Cahen. Coll. Les Grands Écrivains de la France.
70. FONTENELLE, B. de Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes, Oxford, 1955, ed. R. Shackleton.
71. FORNIER, R. Discours académiques de l'origine de l'ame, Paris, 1619.
72. GARASSE, Le p. Fr. La Doctrine curieuse des beaux-esprits de ce temps, Paris, 1624.
73. GARASSE, Le p. Fr. Nouveau Jugement de ce qui a esté dict et escrit pour et contre le livre de la Doctrine curieuse des beaux-esprits de ce temps ... Dialogue, Paris, 1625.
74. GARASSE, Le p. Fr. La Somme theologique des veritez capitals de la religion chrestienne, Paris, 1625.
75. GASSENDI, P. Lettres familières à François Luillier, Paris, 1944, ed. B. Rochot.
76. GASSENDI, P. Opera Omnia, Lyon, 1658, 6 vols.
77. GASSENDI, P. Selected Works, New York, 1972, ed. and trans. C. B. Brush.
78. GODWIN, Bishop Fr. The Man in the Moone, London, 1638.
79. GODWIN, Bishop Fr. L'Homme dans la Lune, Paris, 1648, trans. Baudoin.
80. HOBBS, Th. Le Corps politique ou les éléments de la loy morale et civile, n.p., 1652, 'traduit d'Anglois en François par un de ses amis' [S. de Sorbière].
81. HUET, P.-D. De la Situation du Paradis Terrestre, Paris, 1691.
82. HUET, P.-D. Huetiana ou Pensées diverses, Paris, 1722.

83. LA BROSSE, G. de. De la Nature, vertu et utilité des plantes, Paris, 1628.
84. LA METTRIE, J.O. de. L'Homme machine, Leyden, 1748.
85. LA MOTHE LE VAYER, Fr. de. Deux Dialogues faits à l'imitation des anciens, Paris, 1922, ed. E. Tisserand. Collection des chefs d'oeuvres méconnus, no. 27.
86. LE MOYNE, P. De l'art des devises, Paris, 1666.
87. LOYAC, J. de. Les Advis d'un fidèle Conseiller, Paris, 1653 (Au Roy).
88. LOYAC, J. de. Le Libertin converty, Paris, 1635 (To Richelieu).
89. LUCRETIUS CARUS, T. De Rerum Natura, Oxford, 1966, 3 vols., ed. and trans. C. Bailey, Latin/English text.
90. MACHIAVELLI, N. Le Prince, Paris, 1640.
91. MAGNON, J. Artaxerxe. Tragédie, Paris, 1645.
92. MAGNON, J. Sejanus. Tragédie, Paris, 1647.
93. MAILLET, B. de. Telliamed, ou Entretiens d'un philosophe indien avec un missionnaire françois, Amsterdam, 1748, 2 vols. (Also consulted: An English translation, published London, 1750).
94. MERE, A. Gombaud, Chevalier de. Lettres in OEuvres, Amsterdam, 1692, vol. II.
95. MERE, A. Gombaud, Chevalier de. OEuvres complètes, Paris, 1930, ed. Ch.-H. Boudhors (despite the title, this edition does not include the Letters).
96. MERSENNE, Le p. M. L'Impietés des Deistes, et des plus subtils Libertins, Paris, 1624, 2 Pts. in 1 vol.

97. [MERSENNE, Le p. M.]. Questions inouyes ou Recreation des scavans, Paris, 1634.
98. MERSENNE, Le p. M. La Verité des Sciences. Contre les Septiques ou Pyrrhoniens, Paris, 1625.
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agréables douceurs ou l'on dit que l'ambrosie se  
trouve et infusée de son ame, le Vient poul me  
tomba pour faire place, ad'autres cheveux plus  
espais et plus d'eliez, Je sentis ma jeunesse  
se raturer, mon visage, redevenir vermeil  
ma chaleur naturelle, se remesler doucement  
a mon humide radicale, En fin je recullay  
sur mon aage environ quatorze ans,

J'auois cheminé d'enze lieu a trauers vne  
forest de Jassamins [et de mirthes] quand j'aperceus  
couché a l'ombre, Je ne seay quoy qui remuoit  
cestoit vne jeune adolescent dont la majestueuse  
beaulte me forcea presque a l'adoration, Il se  
leua pour me m'empescher, Et ce n'est pas a  
moy Je serai il forceement cest adieu que je  
dois ces humilitez, vous voyés vne personne  
luy respondi je consistee, de tant de miracle  
que je ne seay par lequel debutter mes admirations

Car en premier lieu venu d'un monde que  
vous prenez sans doubte pour vne lune, Je  
ponsois estre abborcé dans vn autre que ceux de  
mon pays apellent la lune, et voila que je me  
trouue en vn paradis aux pieds d'un dieu qui  
ne veult pas estre adoré, et d'un Estranger  
qui parle malanque, hormis la qualite de dieu.

(i) Example of the handwriting of the Munich manuscript  
copy of the 'Lune' (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, no.  
420, Gall. 419). Folios 15<sup>r</sup> and 15<sup>v</sup>. \*

\* Cf. (iii) below.

15<sup>v</sup>

me replica Je, (Ce que vous dittes est véritable  
 cette terre cy est la lune que vous voyés de vostre  
 globe et ce lieu jey ou vous marchés est le  
 paradis, Mais le paradis br estres ou Non  
 Jamais entre que six personnes, Adam.  
 Eve, Enoe, moy qui suis le viel Elye, Saint  
 Jean Leuangeliste, et vous, vous scaués bien  
 comme les deux premiers, en furent Parais.  
 Mais vous ne scaués pas comme Je  
 arrivierent en vostre monde, Je cachet. Done  
 qu'après avoir tasté, tous deux de la pomme offendue  
 Adam qui craignoit que dieu yrrité par sa  
 presence ne rengregast sa punition confidra  
 la lune v're terre comme le seul refuge ou  
 Je se pouvoit mettre a l'abry des poursuites  
 de son createur, or en ce temps la imagination  
 chez les hommes estoit vy forte pour n'auoir  
 point encore esté corrompue, Ny par les  
 desbauches du ciel, ny par la crudité des  
 alliments Ny par l'atraction des maladies  
 Qu'estant alors exité d'un violent desir d'aborder  
 ceor axille, et que toute la masse estant deuenue  
 legere, par le frude cest Entousiasme, J'ly frust

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Enleue'de la mefme forte  
 L'Imagination fortuement tendue a quel quoy, chose d'  
 estre, emportee en l'air par des raius emens  
 que vous appellez extasiques, Elle que  
 L'infirmité d'exon Sexe, rendoit plus foible et  
 moins chaude, n'auoit pas eu sans doute  
 L'Imagination assez vigour euse pour vaincre  
 par la controntion d'eson esprit, le poids de la  
 matiere, Mais par ce qu'il y auoit tres peu  
 quelle auoit este tiree du corps de son mary, la  
 Simpatye dont cette mortie estoit encore liee  
 adont tout la porta vers luy a mesure, qu'il  
 montoit comme l'ambre se fait suire de la  
 paille, com me l'aymant se tourne au septentrion  
 dont il a este arrache, Et adam attira  
 Louurage de sa cote, com me l'amer attire les  
 Feues qui sont sortis d'Elle, Arruies  
 qu'il furent en vostre terre, Ilx se habituerent  
 entre la mesopotamie, Et l'Arabie, Les Hebreux  
 sont cogneu soubz le nom d'adam, Et les Idolastres  
 soubz celluy de promethee, que leurs paetres  
 firent auoir attire' le feu du ciel, auouse de fer  
 descendans qu'il engendra pour ueu d'une ame  
 aussy parfaite, que celle dont dieu l'auoit rempli  
 amy pour habitter vostre monde, le premier.

(ii) Examples of lacunae in the Munich manuscript copy of  
the 'Lune' (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, no. 420,  
Gall. 419). Folios 16<sup>r</sup> and 63<sup>r</sup>.

perroquet pour avoir dit que la lune estoit  
 un monde dont il venoit Car il est homme  
 quand mesmes il ne seroit pas venu de la  
 lune puis que tout homme est libre Ne luy est  
 il pas libre de s'imaginer ce qu'il voudra  
 quoy pourriez vous le contraindre an avoir pas  
 vos . vous le forcez bien a dire

que la lune n'est pas un monde, mais il ne  
 le croira pas pourtant car pour croire qu'il y  
 a chose il faut qu'il se presente a son  
 imagination certaines possibilitez plus  
 grandes au ouy, qu'au Nany, de cette charge  
 ainsi amingz que vous luy fournissiez le  
 vray semblable ou qu'il ne vienne de soy  
 mesme s'offrira son esprit il vous dira bien  
 qu'il voit, Mais il ne croira pas pour  
 cela

J'ay Maintenant avous mouer qu'il  
 ne doit pas estre un dempne sy vous le  
 posez dans la categorie des bestes

Car supposez qu'il soit animal  
 sans raison, quelle raison au'vous, vous

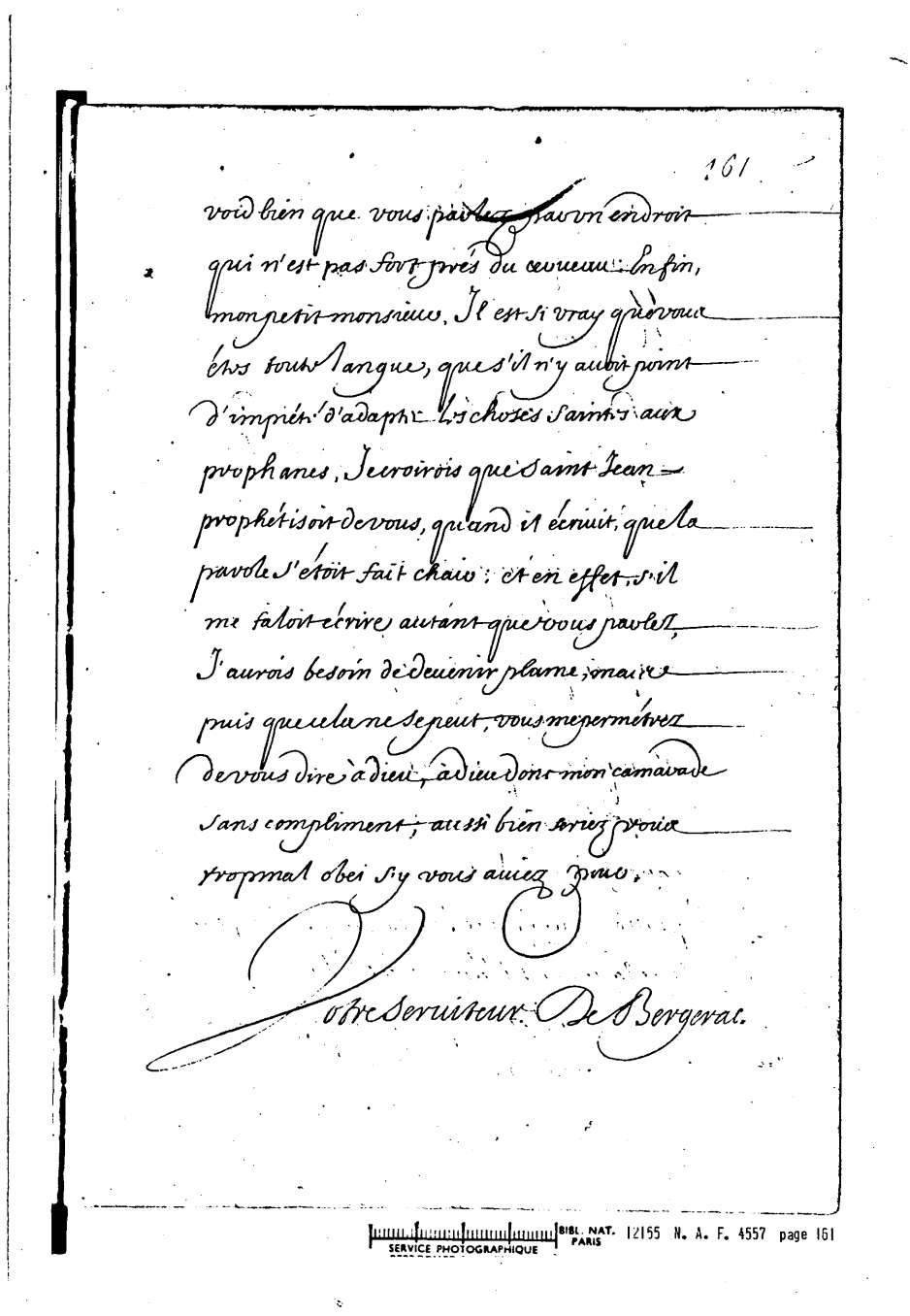


hormis la qualite de Dieu ne  
 repleque-il ce que vous dites  
 est véritable cette terre cy est  
 la meilleure vous voyez de vray  
 globe, et ce lieu cy ou vous marchez  
 c'est le paradis mais c'est le  
 Paradis Terrestre ou n'ont Jamais  
 entré que six personnes. Adam  
 Eve, Enoc, Moy qui suis le vicil  
 helie, St Jean l'Euangliste, et  
 vous, vous sçavez bien comme  
 les deux premiers en furent banis  
 mais vous ne sçavez pas cōt'ils  
 arriverent en vostre monde. Sçachés  
 donc que pres avoir tasté mes deux  
 dela pomme deffendue. eadon qui  
 craignoit que Dieu irrité par sa  
 presence ne rengegeast la punition  
 considéra la Lune, vostre terre  
 cōt le seul refuge ou il se pouvoit  
 mettre a l'abri des pour-  
 suites de son createur] mes en

et des mirthes quand i'apperceus  
 couchés a l'ombre ie ne sçay quoy  
 qui remuoit; c'estoit un Peane ad-  
 oléscent dont la majestueuse  
 beauté me forca presque a l'ad-  
 oration, il se leva pour m'en  
 empêcher: et ce n'est pas a moy  
 s'excuser il fortement c'est a  
 dieu que tu dois ces humilités  
 vous voyez une personne luy mes-  
 pondisse consterné de tant de  
 miracles que ie ne sçay par lequel  
 debiter mes admirations, Car en  
 premier lieu venant d'un monde  
 que vous prenez sans doute icy  
 pour une Lune Je pensois estre  
 a bordé dans un autre que ceux  
 de mon pays appellent la lune aussy,  
 ce voulda que ie me trouue en  
 Paradis aux pieds d'un dieu qui  
 ne veut pas estre adoré et d'un  
 Estranger qui parle ma Langue.

(iii) Example of the handwriting of the Paris manuscript copy of the  
 'Lune' (B.N. Nouv. acq. fr. 4558). Folios 21<sup>v</sup> and 22<sup>r</sup>. \*

\* Cf. (i) above.



- (iv) Example of the handwriting of the Paris manuscript of the 'Letters' (B.N. Nouv. acq. fr. 4557). Folio 161<sup>r</sup>. \*

\* Cf. the manner of signing the name 'De Bergerac' with Cyrano's own signature on a legal document, reproduced in (v) below.

Le mardy deuxième jour de mars audit an mil six cens quarante-neuf, l'assignation verbalement prise entre les parties, sont comparus en personne lesdits Scopart et Desbois rendans compte, assistés de Beaufort, leur procureur.

Les S<sup>r</sup> Savinian de Cirano, S<sup>r</sup> de Bergeraque, et Abel de Cirano, esmancipé d'age, proceddant soubz l'autorité dudit Savinian, son frère et curateur, assisté de François, leur procureur, lesquels après avoir eu communication du compte, ont dict qu'ils advouent tout ce qui a esté faict par ledit François et requis estre présentement procédé à la revision dudit compte.

Du consentement desquelles a esté procédé à la révision dudit compte et ont signé :

Scoppart, Desboys, Beaufort, S. de Cyrano de Bergerac, A. de Cyrano, François.

Et après avoir vacqué depuis l'heure de huit heures jusques à onze heures et que les debatz qui estoient formez sur aulcuns des articles dudit compte ont esté veus et reiglés, lesdites parties ont accordé ledit compte estre par nous calculé clos et affiné en leur absence.

Signé : S. de Cyrano de Bergerac, A. de Cyrano, François, Scoppart, Desboys, de Beaufort.

*S. de Cyrano de Bergerac*

*A. de Cyrano*

Résumons lesdits comptes :

Les recettes s'étaient élevées à trois mille neuf cent cinquante-six livres environ et les dépenses à deux mille huit cent soixante-dix-sept livres environ, laissant un excédant de recettes de mille soixante-dix-huit livres à partager entre les deux frères, soit cinq cent trente-neuf livres pour chacun ; il y avait à en déduire leurs dépenses particulières, soldées par MM. Desbois et Scopart, soit sept cent trente-trois livres environ pour Savinien et cinq cent soixante-seize livres pour Abel, sommes supérieures à celles qui leur revenaient. Heureusement, il restait à effectuer une recette de trois cent quatre livres environ, soit pour chacun : cent cinquante-deux livres, ce qui réduisait

from Cyrano de Bergerac, OEuvres libertines, ed. Fr. Lachèvre, Paris, 1921, vol. I, p. lxxvi.

APPENDIX B

COPIES OF REVIEW ARTICLES OF RECENTLY PUBLISHED CRITICAL  
STUDIES OF ASPECTS OF CYRANO'S WORK

[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible. It appears to be a list of references or a table of contents, possibly including author names, titles of articles, and publication information. The text is too light to transcribe accurately.]

- (i) Copy of Review article published in the 'Modern Language Review', vol. LXVIII (1973), pp. 407-9.

*Cyrano de Bergerac and the Polemics of Modernity.* By ERICA HARTH. New York and London: Columbia University Press. 1970. vi + 288 pp. \$10.00. £4.50.

*La Pensée philosophique et scientifique de Cyrano de Bergerac.* By MADELEINE ALCOVER. (Histoire des idées et critique littéraire, 109) Genève: Droz. 1970. 184 pp. 30 Fr.

Interest in Cyrano's work, and especially in his novels *L'autre Monde ou les états et empires de la Lune et du Soleil*, has grown steadily over the last twenty-five years; in criticism, the legend of Rostand has finally given way to the search for coherence in the work. Professor Pintard's now classic study of *le libertinage érudit* paved the way; Erica Harth and Madeleine Alcover let the work itself take precedence, rejecting the suspect traditional method which used a biography containing little reliable evidence to elucidate his works and those same works to amplify his biography. They reject also the critical games of 'hunt the sources' and 'find the scientific discoveries and inventions of the future' so often played in the past by commentators of *L'autre Monde*. The result is two theses cogently and incisively argued which, while not always in agreement, convince us that Cyrano was a coherent thinker.

Both writers examine Cyrano's thought within the context of the development of ideas from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment. Dr Harth in emphasizing the modernity of his attitudes, tends to play down Cyrano's debt to sixteenth-century Italian naturalism; Dr Alcover, on the other hand, emphasizes the similarity between many of his ideas and those of Pomponazzi and Campanella, and points out that his rationalism is very much rooted in the thought modes of the early seventeenth century, differing from those of the eighteenth century. Both writers, however, ignore the striking parallelism between Cyrano's thought as a whole and that of Giordano Bruno: though we have no first-hand evidence that he did emulate the Nolan, it is by such a confrontation that the most divergent of our critics' interpretations — those of Cyrano's epistemology, may be reconciled.

Dr Harth demonstrates admirably Cyrano's audacity in refuting all miracles, Christian and pagan, in putting on a par revealed religion and superstition, and in scorning the authority of orthodox philosophy: the supernatural may be explained away in natural terms; reason is the most effective and revered weapon against cant. Yet his belief in the plurality of worlds leads him to posit the relativity of all truths: Cyrano is a sceptic, argues Dr Harth. Thus, she cannot accept Dr Annette Lavers' contention, made in her excellent article on *L'autre Monde* (published in the *Cahiers du Sud*, March 1958, pp. 406-16), that Cyrano is a dogmatist who believes in the unity of Truth. Lastly, Dr Harth perceives a progression in Cyrano's thinking, from a largely Gassendist standpoint in the *Lune* to one modified by Cartesian sympathies in the *Soleil*, sympathies which are fully endorsed in the *Cartesian Fragment de Physique* which she considers to be Cyrano's own work.

Dr Alcover concentrates on *L'autre Monde*, and, taking fully into account its form, analyses in turn the ideas expressed by each speaker in the *Lune* and those outlined in each episode of the *Soleil*, with the exception of the battle of the salamander and remora and the *histoire des arbres amants* which she considers to be mere imaginative fancies. Finally she gives a very perceptive résumé of Cyrano's ideas, by themes.

An atheistic materialist, Cyrano endows matter itself with sensation: fire is the activating agent in an ever-changing universe. Dr Alcover does think, however, that the basically Lucretian theory of atomic 'creation' expounded by the two moon philosophers is in principle mechanistic. Yet, even here, despite the semblance of a quantitative physics, it would be as impossible to gauge the behaviour of his atoms as for his microcosmic Man to become master and possessor of a Nature of which he forms an integral part. As she points out, for him, as for the sixteenth-century Naturalists, Nature is one; the law of inertia is a concept completely alien to Cyrano's universe. Despite his inadequate number of senses, Man, compensated by his faculty of reason, is capable of apprehending absolute Truth; for Nature is Truth. Dr Alcover sees in the *Fragment de Physique* Rohault's work; Cartesianism, though entertained in the *Soleil*, is refuted; even the claims traditionally made for Gassendism in the *Lune* are exaggerated.

Diametrically opposed in their appraisal of Cyrano's epistemology, both our critics would seem to overstate their case: while Dr Harth concentrates on the

satirical relativism which is the basis of Cyrano's attack on anthropocentrism and human institutions, Dr Alcover bases her argument on the experience of the super-human Daemon of Socrates and on Dyrcona's immediate and instinctive comprehension of the language of Truth in the ideal, though natural, regions of the sun. Dr Harth considers relativism and belief in the unity of Truth to be mutually exclusive; but this is not invariably the case, as the Cusan doctrine of the coincidence of contraries shows. Indeed, already in the moon, Cyrano's hero learns that it is possible to prove without sophistry that 'toutes choses sont vraies', to 'unir physiquement les vérités de chaque contradictoire, comme par exemple que le blanc est noir et que le noir est blanc'. Again, Dr Harth attributes to Cyrano the extension of the Copernican theory to what she calls its logical conclusion, an infinite number of sun-centred worlds in an infinite universe; but this is a peculiarly Brunian vision, as is the realization of the implications of Cusan metaphysics in the realm of physics and of ethics. In one particular only does Cyrano's philosophy differ radically from the Nolan's: in the final analysis, Bruno spiritualizes matter; an immanentist God informs every part of his cosmos. Cyrano, using the same set of theories, leaves no room for any kind of divinity; his fiery world-soul is as material as the bodies it enlivens. Cyrano is to Bruno as the eighteenth-century Cartesians are to Descartes: mystic gives way to atheistic naturalism in the first case, beast-machine to man-machine in the second. Lastly, Cyrano's very eclecticism seems less singular when we consider that already, by the turn of the century, Cartesians were assimilating Gassendi to their system; this, surely, an excellent example of the role of Time in a real-life coincidence of contraries.

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- (ii) Copy of Review article for the 'Modern Language Review'  
(in press).

*Cyrano de Bergerac et l'art de la pointe*. By JEANNE GOLDIN. Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal. 1973. 274 pp.

With the exception of the satirical letters 'Contre les Sorciers' and 'Contre les Frondeurs' the epistolary writing of Cyrano de Bergerac has been dismissed as a stylistic curiosity piece, or simply ignored. Traditionally, critics have been interested in the life of the author, commenting, in particular since Rostand's poetic figment, upon the difference between the 'real' and the legendary figure. Alternatively, they have examined his philosophical and scientific ideas, either seeking the possible sources of them, or searching for prescience of later inventions or discoveries. In the last thirty years, historically based assessment of his thought has predominated.

To Dr Jeanne Goldin goes the distinction of affording the *Letters* serious consideration as artistic creations in their own right. Hers is the first full-length study of the subject, and the first implicitly to suggest that an appropriate basis for adjudging Cyrano's imaginative works could well be a stylistic one. Her aim is to 'saisir le monde unique d'un poète'.

Mme Goldin's critical tools are deliberately eclectic and her terms of reference wide, if, at times, disparate. She introduces and rounds off her enquiry by situating Cyrano's predilection for the *pointe* within the framework of his Italian and Spanish contemporaries' theories of the *concelto*, of *acutezza* (or *agudeza*), and of *ingegno* (or *ingenio*); this last is likened to the prizing in French polite society of *bel esprit*. The body of the study consists in an exhaustive linguistico-stylistic analysis of Cyrano's *pointes*, the method of which takes much from structuralist models provided by critics such as Barthes and Todorov on the one hand, and on the other, in particular in the examination of the *pointe* as metaphor, from the *Rhétorique générale* (Paris, 1970) of the Structural Linguistic Group  $\mu$  of Liège, led by Jean Dubois, notable for its a-historical rendering of the *eleutio* section of the traditional manual of rhetoric. Side by side with this, and especially in the later Chapters IV and V, Mme Goldin draws on baroque concepts, as elucidated, in the main, by Jean Rousset; all the while, she makes reference, in the footnotes, to parallel evidence from seventeenth-century French, Italian, and Spanish theoreticians which corroborates her findings, as well as adding depth and breadth to the main text. While

the non-'linguist' might be forgiven for feeling that the categories into which the operation of the *pointes* are divided appear over-refined, and the technical language and diagrams of the fourth chapter puzzling, he will undoubtedly find illuminating Dr Goldin's analyses. How much these owe to the critical approaches employed and how much to this critic's native perspicacity and sensitivity is difficult to gauge; certainly, the essentially inductive method does prove to be the great strength of this book. Thus, characteristically, when, in the final chapter, Mme Goldin juxtaposes judiciously chosen groups of quotations from *L'Autre Monde* with her picture of the metaphorical universe of the *Letters*, the affinity between the two becomes clear, despite the lack of philosophical backing.

The *pointe* consists, explains Dr Goldin, in the unexpected association and dissassociation of objects and concepts, the measure of its success being the astonishment of the reader. Its attraction, as its mechanisms, is intellectual. Cyrano's ingenuity lies in his ability, by the distortion of everyday realities through series of disjunctive word-associations, and by the resolving of paradoxes uncovered thereby, to fashion a new, hitherto undreamed of world of ever-shifting realities, linguistically created: Ultimately, it is this metaphorical world which is the content of each letter, the ostensible theme, whether love, Nature, friendship, or sheer invective, the language which expresses it. In direct contrast to the classical ideal, *disconvenance* is the key to this universe. Though one is still made conscious of classical norms, this study is valuable in enabling us to appreciate, and to accept as artistically viable, an alternative art-form.

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